



UNDEFEATED
BATHYMET
CHRONICLE

最弱無敗の神装機竜

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SENRI AKATSUKI
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Novel Illustrations





最弱無敗の
神装機竜

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「ちよっ!?
マギアルカ隊長!」

「あまり騒ぐでない。
周りの者が起きるじやろうが」

悲鳴を上げようとした瞬間、素早く手で口に蓋をされた。

Prologue – The Past That Arrived to Farewell

—

—A certain day five years ago.

Lux Arcadia who was still twelve years old opened his eyes from sleeping on the desk.

He finished exercising enough in strategy procedure and repeated it many times inside his head.

Before he realized it he was exhausted and fell asleep.

His condition wasn't so good, but he couldn't complain at this climax phase.

Lux had resolved himself in order to destroy the old empire, but he was a nervous wreck until the time the plan was carried out.

「Finally, this day has arrived.....」

A small mansion at the outskirts of the castle town.

It had become the base for refining the strategy for the revolution and for preparatory meeting.

A total of three weeks had passed since several great nobles starting from Count Atismata incited uprising and skirmishes with Arcadia Empire's army began.

The empire was losing patience that the rebellion couldn't really be suppressed, and finally they mobilized the main force of Drag-Knights that were scattered to various places abroad.

It was in order to intercept the rumored assault to the imperial capital by Count Atismata.

Of course Lux was also participating in assistance to the revolution while

hiding his true identity.

Even in the empire, Drag-Knight who was making top notch activity in things like capturing Ruin and the like was very few.

At present, just by wearing Drag-Knight it would become a proof overwhelming battle strength, that was why truly powerful people who even polished their skill didn't even reach twenty percent.

Thus, Lux believed that he could breakthrough after he acquired strength from Fugil's lesson in Drag-Ride.

「.....」

He traced inside his head once more, the plan of the assault to the capital that he polished together with his elder brother.

The essential point of this strategy lied in making 『Count Atismata's revolution』 a success.

The count was already raising many military gains together with the other great nobles who were harboring will of rebellion toward the empire.

Later they would finally invaded toward the castle, then Lux and Fugil would take advantage of that opening and invaded inside the castle through a secret passage and suppressed the inside.

They would capture the imperial family, then they would concede the control of the place to the force of Count Atismata that would arrive later. That would be the flow of events.

With that the remaining force of the empire wouldn't be able to move and the battle would be decided.

「.....It will be soon. Airi, just a little more and this country will—」

The case of his little sister who should be sent out to a place of a remote region's noble became delayed due to the intensifying battle against the revolution army.

Lux muttered with a blank expression, in addition he also turned his thought toward his childhood friend.

Philuffy who was taken away for the sake of human experiment was safely surviving.

He thought of her as dead after he went to save her the other day was just his misunderstanding.

If she couldn't be saved, just what would happen to Lux?

The equilibrium of his mind would crumble from excessive despair and resentment, and after that he might head to massacre the imperial family of the old empire.

But, the girl returned back without anything happening to her as though such fact didn't happen.

As though the original course of destiny was corrected to the direction that Lux was wishing for.

「.....Course correction? Just what am I thinking? Isn't that impossible, such thing—」

He smiled wryly and talked to himself.

Surely it was Lux's misunderstanding because of his shock that Philuffy was kidnapped for human experiment.

That's right. If not, then that sight was—.

「-.....!? U.....!」

Suddenly there was a prickling pain in his brain, his sight was covered with static that was like sandstorm.

Since that day, something that felt out of place was born inside Lux.

His perception—was feeling strange distortion toward this world.

—

「—My younger brother. Lux, are you there? Soon it will be our turn.」

Fugil's voice that came along with knocking sound caused Lux to be taken aback and he lifted his face.

He didn't notice because he was in a daze, but when he saw the clock, it was

already dusk.

In the capital, the battle against the revolution army that was led by Count Atismata was already starting.

After this Lux and Fugil would take advantage of the darkness to launch surprise attack, removed the Drag-Knights protecting the castle, and guided Count Atistmata into the castle.

With that, it would be over.

This long period of tyrannical rule, the history of Arcadia Empire, everything would end.

「Yes. I will be there right away.」

He had piled up training for the sake of this.

Now that he was able to perfectly used Divine Drag-Ride Bahamut, he would be able to execute this plan without a doubt.

The only drawback was the Drag-Ride's operation time. It wasn't like he would face all the Drag-Knights of the empire that numbered more than a thousand, even so if he was asked whether he would be able to bring down that much Drag-Knights in less than ten minutes with certainty, than the answer was no.

It seemed that Fugil was preparing a secret plan for the sake of compensating for that.

「Looks like there is no problem with your body. Then I will grant you the plan that I told you since long ago.」

From behind Fugil who was entering the room, a girl wearing beautiful dress entered.

She had silver hair and grey eyes just like Lux and others of the imperial family. However Lux had no recollection of the girl's face at all.

From the head of the beautiful girl who looked like a doll with her lack of vigor, two small horns were growing.

「That girl, who is—?」

Lux was bewildered seeing the strange looking girl who he met for the first time.

But, for some reason he felt like he had seen her before.

Lux had met with a girl whose appearance was really similar with this girl somewhere, he—.

「Arshalia Rei Arcadia. Now this Automaton will perform Baptism to your body. It's to prolong the time you can fight while wearing Bahamut and so you can use Over Limit.」

「Baptism.....? No, more importantly you said Arcadia.....!？」

At that instant, a distortion suddenly appeared inside Lux's mind.

The inside of his head became hazy, and he became unable to recall anything.

The sight that Lux was looking at was distorted, and he collapsed with a thud.

And then, Lux opened his eyes.

Episode 1 – The Memory’s Continuation

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Part 1

「U, nn.....」

Lux was feeling the texture of something warm and soft.

It wasn't just that, somehow there was also a gentle scent that made him relaxed.

It felt like he was going to be pulled away from the sleepiness where he wanted to keep sleeping forever, but the pink hair that suddenly crossed in front of his eyes made him return to his senses in surprise.

「.....-!? Phi-chan!? Why are you here!?!」

「Kuu..... Lu-chan. Munya munya.....」

Looking closer, inside the guest room that was illuminated by sunlight, it seemed he was dozing off on the sofa.

Philuffy arrived at that time and then snuggled close to Lux in her Academy uniform and fell asleep.

「I see, here is inside the fortress.」

Marcafal Kingdom's abandoned capital Guernica.

It was the world alliance's base for the decisive battle that was set up near the old castle.

The captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca put some work on the building, and she also arranged for substantial amount of materials.

The great amount of wounded soldiers who suffered damage from the battle the other day were transported to the capital of Marcafal Kingdom.

There would be only three days until the next battle, so they wouldn't have the leeway to be saddled with people unable to fight in the fortress.

The remaining Drag-Knights were Seven Dragon Paladins and Lisha and others, the members of Syvalles.

Along with two hundred remaining force of world alliance, and the White Ridge knight order that Singlen was leading.

According to the talk of Holy Arcadia Empire's second imperial princess Aeryl, if two and a half day more passed, the path toward the latter half of Avalon, the deep level floor that connected to the center would be opened.

There would only be little time until then, but Lux and others would use that time for rest.

For the sake of the coming battle, they had to lessen their fatigue as much as possible.

Because of that, after eating lunch today, he took a nap in his room.

「Phi-chan. Look, wake up. Or rather, why are you here?」

「Munya munya, fua.....」

She responded with a tone that was following her own pace as usual while she slowly opened her eyelids.

Those eyes that looked even sleepier than usual were reflecting the wry smile of Lux.

How should he say it, even though it hadn't even been ten days since they parted in the Academy, Philuffy's existence felt really nostalgic.

—Was it because of that? That he saw that kind of dream just now.

「But, just what was it? That dream.....」

Rather than a simple dream, it gave him a strange feeling as though he was tracing back a memory, it was odd.

He had no memory of hearing Fugil saying that kind of words, and he had also never seen an Automaton named Arshalia.

No, if those strange horns growing on her head were removed, she looked exactly the same like Sacred Eclipse.

「Does that mean that the situation is finally getting to me I wonder.」

He would finally have to oppose Fugil wearing Drag-Knight, and raced against the Lord to conquer Avalon.

The intense anxiety toward the coming all-out confrontation might be the cause of the nightmare that Lux was seeing.

「.....Lu-chan. Wake up quickly, master was calling.」While thinking of such thing, Philuffy said that to him while rubbing her eyes.

「Yes?」

Saying that, Lux shook his head that was befuddled from just waking up and he tried to surmise the meaning of his childhood friend's words.

The 『master』 that Philuffy mentioned referred to Magialca Zen Vanfrick, the multi-millionaire who was her instructor in martial arts.

She was also the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, and current in this place her duty in that post was her main.

「I was told to call for Lu-chan, so I tried waking you up.」

「Wai-!? Just now Phi-chan, you were napping together with me! You didn't look trying waking me up at all you know!?!」

「.....Lu-chan. You looked like you didn't want to be wakened up, so I waited a bit.」

「Why are you even taking consideration to the want of the sleeping me!? Not that, if there is a business then I need to hurry!」

He was wearing his uniform even while napping, so there was no need to change.

Lux lightly put his appearance in order using mirror, and then he headed toward Magialca's room together with Philuffy in panic.

When he entered inside the office, Magialca was relaxing on an extravagant sofa inside.

「Hohou. You, recently you've made really great contribution with good vibes, but you've really become a big-shot now huh, to make me, your captain to wait so long like this.」

The bottle of wine that was placed on the table was already half empty. It could be guessed that she was taking a drink to kill time.

Seeing that, Lux was relieved in a sense.

Because he understood that for her to drink alcohol from afternoon meant that this wouldn't be a talk about important command or the like.

「Does captain want a companion for drinking alcohol? Just because Relie-san isn't here, such thing.....」

「You think I'll do that!? It was because you didn't come that I've got too much time on my hand. My unworthy disciple too, she looks completely half asleep there.」

Even her master's sarcasm was completely eluded by Philuffy with her absentminded state.

At this kind of time, Philuffy's ability in ignoring things was enviable in a sense.

「And, can you tell me the reason of the call?」

「Right. You are resting for three days including today correct? However this is the diligent you we are talking about here. I think you will try to do some work on your own accord anyway. So I called you here to give you a chore for killing time.」

It seemed that it was a request for doing a chore after so long.

He felt like it would be fine even if he didn't do anything like that in the fortress just before the final decisive battle, but doing this might be just the diversion he needed to calm himself.

「The instructions are written on this paper. Return here when you are finished okay? Work is only over for the first time after you finished your report.」

「That's fine but, Philuffy will also come along with me?」

The description 『Act together with your childhood friend!』 was written at the top. When it caught Lux's curiosity somewhat—.

「Naturally. After all I'm also someone who is thinking about my disciple. I'm thinking to use this work as excuse for making you two spend time together. Kukuku, if I report it later to Relie, she will surely make consideration for my convenience in our business dealing with each other.」

「Please hide your true feeling a little bit.....」

Although, it felt like this scheme would show extraordinary result for the^{Relie} headmaster who was really doing on her little sister Philuffy.

(That person really doesn't hesitate to mix self-interest with her work after all. She is a good person though.....)

Lux leaked out a sigh of exasperation while following the instructions.

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Part 2

Until two and half a day later when the gate of Avalon's deep level floor was opened, it seemed the soldiers in the area were nervous, but unexpectedly it wasn't like that inside the fortress.

Perhaps the recoil from the battle that was too fierce made everyone's feeling to be temporarily paralyzed.

It was a fact that the body wouldn't hold if someone was persevering too much despite their fatigue, so in any case rest was necessary.

「Lu-chan. Somehow, today you are strange you know?」

「Eh.....?」

While doing the chore that Magialca instructed him to do, like receiving or delivering material and so on, Philuffy who was walking beside him said such thing.

With a bag filled with snacks in one hand, she peered fixedly into Lux's eyes.

「Somehow, you are acting absentminded since some time ago.」

「.....」

Lux felt conflicted that Philuffy pointed out such thing to him, but certainly it might be just as she said.

The reason was most likely the content of the dream he saw before this.

Keeping it inside by himself wouldn't bring anything, so he tried talking about it to Philuffy.

After all she had seen through Lux's anxiety anyway.

「—And so, I saw a strange dream about five years ago. I think perhaps that dream was because I am too nervous due to the possibility that soon I might be battling Fugil-niisan finally.」

「.....I also saw one you know, a dream of different past.」

「Eh!？」

The words that Philuffy said with a serious face caused Lux's hand that was pushing a delivery cart to unconsciously stop.

「A dream where I died and discarded underground the monastery of Ries Island. At that time, Lu-chan also came. I was still on the verge of death, but Lu-chan received shock seeing me not moving and flew out. The memory stop there.」

The incident five years ago, when Philuffy was kidnapped for human experiment.

His memory regarding the matter of Ries Island was cut off hazily for some reason.

「After that.....I don't know. When I noticed, I had gone back to Nee-chan's side.」

「.....The, then, it must be only your feeling. Phi-chan is safe like this right now after all.」

Seeing the collapsed Philuffy, Lux misunderstood that she had died and his mind fell into chaos from the excessive shock.

At the very least, Lux was thinking like that until now but—.

「However, I remembered a bit. Lu-chan's Onii-san who I saw near the fortress yesterday. At that time that person also came inside the monastery's basement. That's what I feel.」

「—Wait a second!? What do you mean!？」

Five years ago, Fugil came to Ries Island. This was the first time Lux heard that.

But, Philuffy didn't change her expression, she was only staring straight ahead.

「I don't understand. I also remembered it only just now. Perhaps, there is some kind of connection, with Avalon being nearby.」

「.....」

The unfamiliar memory that sometimes flashed on the back of Lux's mind until now.

He completely thought that it was hallucination that Lux's own heart showed him, but it was strangely concerning that even Philuffy was having similar experience.

Five years ago, just what in the world happened at the day of the incident in Ries Island and the day of the revolution—.

「It's meaningless even if you only think about that matter. Looks like the current you has remembered huh.」

「.....-!？」

The moment they turned on the corner of the corridor inside the fortress, a figure appeared that caused Lux to hold his breath.

A man wearing eye patch and coat with deep ultramarine color.

He emitted an overwhelming aura that was mismatched with his small and thin body. The Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit.

He was the captain of Blackend Kingdom's White Ridge knight order, and the vice captain of Seven Dragon Paladins.

His jet black eye that was like a bottomless abyss was capturing Lux's face.

「What is your business? You are going to give an invitation even at this kind of time? I should have told you that I won't submit to you.」

「I should have told you that I have no more intention of that. —Then why am I accosting you like this right now? Let me ask back, am I not allowed to address you? Even like this I am still your superior.」

「Kuh.....」

Like always, his attitude was haughty and arrogant, looking down on other people.

But he strangely had a clever mouth that could skillfully convince other people.

He was someone that was hard to deal with in a different meaning from Magialca. This man's action couldn't be predicted.

When Lux was perplexed of how to reply, Philuffy beside him suddenly stepped forward.

「Donut, I'll give you one if you want. Proof of acquaintance.」

「.....Wha-!?!」

Philuffy took out a donut from her portable snack bag and casually presented it to Singlen.

It seemed Philuffy mistook the gaze that was directed to her as a wish for snack.

However, even if this was Philuffy who was always at her own pace, this was too reckless.

It would be a different matter if it was with the other Seven Dragon Paladins, but the opponent now was that Singlen.

「Phi-chan, don't do that. Making that kind of conversation with him is——」

「A daughter of Aingram Conglomerate huh, I'll accept it thankfully.」

「Eeh!?!」

This time it was Lux's turn to be shocked.

That Singlen received donut from Philuffy, and then he began to eat of all things.

(What is going on? What is this guy thinking? Just what kind of secret is inside that donut——?) 「What are you staring at? Is it that strange for me to eat snack?」

.....Extremely.

Lux couldn't say that.

Even so this was surreal.

Whether it was Singlen who even though he was smiling, it didn't reach his eye and he didn't look like he was enjoying eating the snack at all.

Or Philuffy who wasn't bothered about anything and continued to eat her snack on her own pace.

In a sense, it was a sight that possessed different abnormality than the dream that he saw before this.

「Hou, the outside is hard. It's a texture that I like.」

At that time Singlen suddenly showed a mysterious smile and began to evaluate the donut's taste.

「I see, so it was fried. Even though the situation is tense like this, you really have a guts to cook snack in a fortress at a battlefield.」

Singlen gave an evaluation that was unclear whether it was sarcasm or praise.

(What is his intention? Hidden behind this conversation—)

「It's not like I have a hidden motive here. I'm merely giving praise to that girl's skill and courage though?」

(He is even reading my heart so casually.....!)

Singlen finished eating the donut silently, and then he wiped his mouth with a handkerchief.

Right after that, Lux started to talk with him from being unable to endure the silence.

「And, what is your business here? What do you want to make me do?」

「Hm? Aah, about that huh.」

Singlen spoke as though he suddenly remembered something and his cheeks loosened.

「I'm thinking to give you warning as insurance. Although Avalon will fall into my hand no matter what happen, but I don't know what is going to occur from here on.」

「Warning.....?」

When Lux tilted his head from lacking understanding of what Singlen meant, Singlen started talking with a smile that was filled with implication.

「I know your future. What I want to say is to resolve yourself about how you will move at that time.」

「Are you trying to misled me with words again?」

Lux was immediately on guard, but Singlen's fearless smile didn't crumble.

「Don't jump at every little thing, chore boy. How about acting composed like that woman beside you?」

Even though Singlen said that, but he couldn't let his guard down against him so he was wary like this.....

「What, this won't be a bad talk for you too. —It will be soon. In just a bit more you will also end up knowing the truth. But the truth is a troublesome thing. It's something you better off not knowing. There are many truths that cannot be changed and will only make you suffer if you know them.」

「I am currently have work to do, so can you be quicker about it?」

Lux casually tried to cut off the talk, but Singlen's attitude didn't change.

「There was a phenomenon that was called as calamity. It also happened a few years ago in our Blackend Kingdom and a lot of people became sacrifice. A commissioned officer at our place obtained Elixir and ran wild, causing insurrection within the country.」

「What, are you saying.....?」

「You see, originally I didn't have any interest in something like the authority of royalty and noble. Right now I had come back into the seat of Blackend Kingdom's general, but from the beginning this kind of position is inconsequential. I also didn't want to get involved with those bunches since the start.」

「.....」

The man turned a gaze that was filled with emptiness toward empty air as though he was reminiscing.

「Don't you think it's stupid, Lux Arcadia? Why were you unable to persuade the imperial family of the old empire in the past but relied on a method like revolution to change the country instead? Was it because those bunches

wouldn't listen? Was it because your position was weak?」

「.....I don't know. But, at that time there was no other method than that—」

「That's not it chore boy. You should have noticed already. After all the nature of living thing is they can only live by their own convenience. Therefore the act of appealing to something like human conscience itself is mistaken. Because of that naivety, I lost my only blood-related family.」

Singlen's smile didn't change even while he was talking about the death of his relative.

「Well, that couldn't be helped. It was the survival of the fittest thing. You will be stolen from if you are weak. That is the constant of the world. I don't plan to speak differently. But—」

At that time Singlen's jet black eye was tinged with muddy black killing intent.

「Those bunches who I overlooked without even getting into quarrel with them, they just kept getting carried away to the utmost. I had no choice but to act. Just like you.」

If Lux's memory served him right, right after Drag-Ride was discovered, he immediately quelled the civil war and ascended to the position of general.

After that because of his merciless way of fighting, he was chased away from the seat of general, but was the reason he performed meritorious deed at first was to protect the family that he mentioned just now?

But ironically, it later led to the fate of him losing his elder sister.

「.....」

Lux couldn't say it out loud, but he thought that he was similar.

With his past self who was banished from the palace, lost his place to belong, with his grandfather and his mother died, and even his little sister and childhood friend were taken away from him.

And also how he acted to try to change that.

But, after losing his important person, Singlen didn't balk at ruling with power.

「And then—I encountered that Fugil ten years ago, and obtained Leviathan and Senjin.」

「.....-!? What do you mean!?!」

Lux who was listening to the story until now reflexively flared up with his expression changing.

Why was Fugil at Blackend Kingdom and involved with Singlen?

He granted Drag-Ride and technology, bringing about power to change the country.

Lux and Singlen overlapped each other looking at that flow of various events.

「You don't know anything about that man who you believe as your elder brother. But I realized it. About that man's scheme and goal.」

‘Kukuku’, Singlen lifted the corner of his lips and smirked.

「You are trying to follow the same path like me in the past. You were directed by that man to become like that. But I instead have gone off the rail from that path. That was why I wanted you as replacement. In order to pull your existence that is changed into the singularity of destiny under me.」

「.....I don't understand, your meaning. It was my own will who chose the revolution. Fugil had no reason to make me do that. If he wanted, he could do it himself instead of making me do it, and above all else my elder brother betrayed me!」

Lux objected with his voice unconsciously turning rough.

But Singlen only responded with a haughty grin.

「Don't make me say it repeatedly. You will understand even if you don't want it if you reach the center of Avalon. Just do your best to stay quiet until then. So that you can become useful for this me that is.」

Singlen only said that and he turned around to leave.

Lux felt like he had heard some kind of important talk, at the same time he also didn't understand at all the meaning of Singlen's words.

Lux immersed himself in his thought with the feeling as though he had been

led around by a fox.

「Lu-chan, let's go. We have to do, master's instructions.」

When his childhood friend called out to him, Lux' tension suddenly left.

At this kind of time, Philuffy who was always at her own pace unwaveringly was reliable.

「Phi-chan, what do you think? About Sir Singlen's words just now.」

「.....Nn, I didn't get it at all, what he was saying.」

Lux felt fatigue hearing her too honest words.

「But, it's fine. Because, I'll protect Lu-chan.」

Saying that, she continued with a faint smile.

Perhaps this was why Philuffy was strong, Lux thought suddenly.

Her mind wouldn't get caught by needless things or things that were pointless no matter how hard one thought about it, even so she wouldn't lose sight of what was important.

「But, I wonder why. Somehow that person, look lonely somewhere inside.」

「.....」

Lux hesitated of what he should say in respond to Philuff's impression.

But, in the end he couldn't find the words and he started walking inside the fortress to carry out his instructions.

—

Part 3

「Fuu.....this is the last.」

Lux who went around everywhere and finished the chore of carrying materials was enjoying the snack that Philuffy shared with him and took a break in the corridor.

He gazed at the destroyed old castle that was far away from the window, but it was extremely quiet right now.

There wasn't any sign that the situation would move for a while more.

He still didn't understand what kind of thing the door that connected to Avalon's deep floor level.

「Fua.....」

When he looked toward the voice, Philuffy was leaning on the wall and began to let out sleeper's breathing.

As expected, her fatigue was great because of the reckless acts that she had done continuously until now.

Lux sent off his childhood friend until the guest room inside the castle. After that a girl who was breathing hard *huff huff* appeared before Lux.

「Oi Lux! I was looking for you! Good grief, sneaking away from your room, where did you go?」

The girl with her blonde hair tied into swaying side tail was the princess of the new kingdom, Lizsharte.

As expected, because she forced herself to march until this abandoned capital Guernica and then joined the battle, it seemed today she was sleeping since the morning—.

「Haha-ue would change location Marcafal's royal capital soon! We are going

to give her our words of farewell now!」

「—! Understood. Let's go.」

Most likely while Lux was undertaking the chore request, Lisha came to his room to call him.

The queen of the new kingdom, Raffi would withdraw from the fortress. The representatives from the other seven countries would also do the same.

What Lisha mentioned about changing location—in this situation, it meant that they would withdraw to a safer place than here.

The problem in reality was that the sovereigns of each country came until this far because of the threat that the Lord Listelka made. Now that the Seven Dragon Paladins had been recovered, there was no reason for them to stay in this dangerous area.

The queen didn't return until the new kingdom was because if the decisive battle in three more days was concluded and Avalon was obtained, a negotiation between the countries would be waiting.

Actually, it seemed Celis's father, one of the four great nobles, Dist Ralgris also came here as the queen's guard commander during her stay here.

But, first Lux headed toward the reception room inside the fortress together with Lisha who was his master.

Originally it should be a dreary and rustic room, but because of Magialca's remodeling, it was remade to have pointlessly magnificent interior decoration.

After they announced themselves and entered inside, they saw Queen Raffi wearing a dress sitting on a sofa, with Prime Minister Nulph standing right beside her.

「Your majesty. Please forgive my lateness in giving the greeting.」

First Lux fell on one knee and bowed, then Lisha followed after him.

But, Raffi showed a largehearted smile and immediately urged them to raise their head.

「There is no eyes of other people here. Such formal greeting is unnecessary.

Both of you, you have admirably fought hard until this far.」

Her smile was bright as usual, but her expression looked slightly tired.

—It's understandable. Lux thought.

The danger of world's destruction due to the appearance of Sacred Eclipse.
The agitation of the people due to the trap of the Lord Listelka.

And then there was also the battle in this abandoned capital. Just how much her nerves had been frayed in this short time.

「It's really pathetic for me to retreat in this period of time when the deep level floor of Avalon is finally going to be opened, but us staying here right now will only become a liability. Please, I ask you to protect my daughter Lisha.」

「Yes. I swear, even if it cost me this life.」

Lux immediately replied affirmatively to Raffi's words.

After finishing the simple talk about what was waiting ahead, Raffi suddenly looked outside the window.

「Come to think of it, it's still only five years since the day of the revolution. You who were a young boy at that time now has become a splendid young man but, how about me I wonder?」

「I beg your pardon but, I believe that your majesty has splendidly bring the new kingdom together.」

Lux expressed that without any hesitation. However Raffi's face was clouded.

「Is that so? If I can speak about my true feeling, I am feeling a bit tired.」

「Haha-ue?」

Now the bowing Lisha also reflexively let out her voice. Perhaps she was surprised by Raffi's fainthearted attitude.

「Although I came from a family of noble house with long history, I was just a daughter of a count. Unlike my elder brother who was the territory lord and called a great man, I'm out of my depth to rule the country. Even so, if it is for the sake of this country then I will give it my all but—」

Queen Raffi hung her head down with a powerless smile and continued.

「Without borrowing the power of the four great nobles, I cannot even properly move the military or consolidate the government. Even the consuls who are called as the old empire faction also tightened their pressure on me with the incident this time. It was only my incompetence that got talked widely among the people.」

「Your majesty, there is no such thing. They are just using the emergency this time as an excuse to steal the authority. There is no need to fret over this.」

When Prime Minister Nulph gently chided her, Queen Raffi nodded weakly.

「I know..... Forgive me you two, for making the heroes who will depart to the decisive battle to save the world after this to listen to my timid words.」

「No, I intend to give my all so that I will be able to receive the favor from your majesty.」

When Lux replied with a serious gaze, Raffi finally smiled.

「Thank you, Lux. I will pray for your victory.」

When Raffi and Prime Minister Nulph exited the room, Lux and Lisha continued to see them off.

And then after they parted at the back gate of the fortress, Lux slipped out a small sigh.

「Her majesty is also being troubled.」

「Yeah, when this battle is over, I also have to become Haha-ue's strength as the princess. A, at that time of course, I'll have you who are my knight to help out too you know? This is just a talk about official business till the end, so this shouldn't be violating the pact.」

Lisha talked to Lux with a somewhat irritated expression.

There was a pact that none of the girls would steal a head start in regard of Lux until this battle was over, but the other day Krulcifer was making appeal to Lux in the middle of battle.

Therefore, Lisha herself also harbored a feeling of rivalry.

She thought that if only she could continue to talk about the matter from

here on too with Lux smoothly like this but—.

「Of course. Ah, but come to think of it, what happened with my Bahamut?」

「Ah.....! Wait a bit, the maintenance of our Drag-Rides still remained..... Shit, just why. Why this kind of troublesome things happened only at my time-!」

There were also several skilled mechanics in this fortress that who Magialca hired.

But, they also had to repair the Drag-Rides of Seven Dragon Paladins. They wouldn't make it in time at all to fix up everyone's Drag-Ride in just three days.

Thus, Lisha too was recruited in order to give maintenance to the Drag-Ride of Syvalles as a mechanic.

Lux consoled the anguished Lisha, then he sent her off until the Drag-Ride hangar.

After that he returned to the guest room and rested his body for a while. The sun would set soon at that time.

「Oops, I have to look at Aeryl's condition soon.」

The restrain on Aeryl was loosened bit by bit, but Lux's accompaniment was necessary when she moved around.

After this he had the role to lead her out of the dungeon to take dinner in the reception hall.

—

Part 4

「Ah, good evening, Lux-kun.」

When Lux descended to the underground prison, Aeryl called out to him smilingly.

Today she was wearing plain clothes of white blouse and black skirt. It was only her right arm that was chained. She was reading a book dexterously even with that restrain.

At first she was restrained strictly for security, but the restriction was changed gradually to a simple one.

When Lux took off the chain with the key he brought, Aeryl smiled cheerfully at him.

「You took it off without hesitation. But, perhaps you are being too careless. I am tentatively a dangerous character after all.」

「Isn't it a good thing? After all it means that you are being trusted this time for sure.」

When Lux smiled while saying that, Aeryl kept sitting on the bed and she nodded with her eyes looking down.

「Right. But it's a bit unfortunate. Even though I thought that I can be fed by Lux-kun for a bit more.」

「Ahaha.....」

Lux's feeling went past through exasperation into a wry smile at Aeryl's mischievous teasing.

The other day, in the middle of the clash against the Lords, she was betrayed and then betraying her remaining family. A lot happened but, it seemed Aeryl was relatively unburdened by it.

「Is there nothing wrong? Like an injury, or your body's condition worsening?」

「Nope. Rather I feel good. With this I finally don't need to lie to myself and also to everyone else after all.」

「.....」

Aeril's voice that sounded relieved from the bottom of her heart caused Lux to lose his words.

Thinking back, her heart must be really burdened even when she was spending time as 『Coral』 of Vanheim Principality.

She covered up her gender, her background, and even her race with fake perception. She continued a life as spy.

Even so, she was wavering whether to ally herself with the Lord or with Lux and co.

「More importantly, are you really fine with it? Of siding with us?」

「.....Yes.」

Aeril drank the water inside her glass, and then she responded after hesitating slightly.

「Listelka-neesama too is actually a pitiful person. Because Nee-san was born as an imperial princess right when the Lord's ruling power was at the strongest, the 『education』 that was given to her couldn't be compared with me and Hayes.」

—Education.

It wasn't just a training to obtain the disposition as the successor of the world ruler and of how to be a good emperor, it also meant that severe ideology of elitism was also planted inside her.

Furthermore, right after she inherited the position of an imperial princess, she learned that the rebellion by the family of traitor was intensifying.

From Listelka's position, she could only think of it as herself receiving irrational attack.

「That's why, I'm feeling just a bit complicated. But, to stay like that will only

be a repeat of the same thing. Ruling over other like that, the anger and resentment of the people will accumulate and rebellion will occur, then again—」

「I understand.」

A negative cycle that continued forever.

In order to sever it, Aeryl turned her back on her blood related sisters and the mission of Lord.

She sided with the world alliance with the resolve to sacrifice even herself. Lux was grateful for it.

「Aeryl. If it's possible, I'll try to capture Hayes and also Listelka alive.」

「—Eh?」

Lux tapped the shoulder of the girl who looked somewhat lonely. Aeryl opened her eyes wide in surprise.

「Perhaps, if we win, then the world alliance will execute them. But, they might be able to survive by some chance. If that isn't possible than at least, I want to let you talk to them.」

「.....」

Aeryl's eyes turned widely round for with dumbfounded look for a while at Lux's words.

But, a few seconds later her lips suddenly loosened and her shoulders shook from holding laughter.

「Lux-kun, you are a strange person just as I thought. Even though normally there is no way such thing is possible, when it's you who say it, somehow it feels like I can believe in it.」

Aeryl who was saying such thing had no spite at all in her expression and tone.

「Thank you Lux-kun. Somehow, I feel a bit at ease.」

「Then, how about we go to eat dinner now? We will be scolded again if we are too late.」

Aeryl responded with a smile at Lux's invitation.

She then took his hand and then headed from the dungeon toward the reception hall.

—

Part 5

Including today, there was a rest of three days before the path to Avalon's deep level floor was opened.

However till the end Lux thought that they would pass the time silently until then.

The destroyed old castle was less than a few kl ahead of them, and although a lot of injured soldiers were transported away, they were still in a state of high alert.

But, the moment Lux and Aeryl entered the reception hall of the fortress, they stiffened with a blank look.

「Lux-kun..... Perhaps I'm too tired. I can see some kind of hallucination though?」

「Then, I'm also the same.」

Aeryl muttered in bewilderment. In respond Lux also replied back with a really conflicted expression.

The fortress that should be in solemn atmosphere despite the extravagant interior design had changed appearance into a dazzling and splendorous space.

Red carpet that had soft embroidery. The chandelier that was illuminating the hall was an antique, but because of that a high class feeling could be sensed.

In addition, an aroma that was created from fruit was kindled to give nice fragrance to the air.

「This place should be the fortress's reception hall right?」

When Aeryl rubbed her eyes, a young male waiter appeared there.

It was the butler young man who was Magialca's aide, Lolotte.

「Welcome. Today, I have prepared a meager banquet due to the idea of my

master Magialca. Please forget the battle and enjoy the night.」

He bowed his head with a voice that sounded somewhat sorry.

It seemed he had the awareness that the atmosphere of this place was inappropriate in this situation.

(.....Even so, somehow it feels like I can understand the reason, why Relie-san and Captain Magialca get along well with each other.) It wasn't simply because their assets rivaled each other or that their age was close, but their hobby was also somewhat similar in some respects.

After receiving wine glass from Lolotte, Lux was guided to a nearby round table.

On top of the pure white table cloth, a tallow lamp was lit, and the swaying flame gave a somewhat fantastic atmosphere.

「.....Good grief, it's really astonishing yeah. People with money and authority really lack common sense.」

「Ah, good evening Greifer.」

Faster than Lux could, Aeril who was familiar with the young man standing there called out to him.

Greifer of Vanheim Principality was nibbling on beef jerky with a sulky expression.

Everyone of new kingdom still hadn't come, but almost all the members of Seven Dragon Paladins were there.

「Good evening Onii-chan. Is your condition already fine?」

When Lux turned around because he felt something pulling on his sleeve, Mel was standing there while holding a wine glass.

As expected he thought it would be bad for her to drink alcohol at that age, but it seemed it was just grape juice.

She was wearing a chic outfit like usual, but as expected from a lady of a distinguished family, somehow she seemed overflowing with elegance.

「I seem to have an aura? That's only natural. When I become a bit more

adult, I will become even more charming for sure. At that time Onii-chan, come to play at Ymir too.」

「Right. I'll surely go.」

Lux nodded like that to the lovely girl who was full of confidence like usual.

Her way of speaking that made it seemed like it was only natural to survive and win this battle felt dependable instead.

「Ee, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming this evening.」

While they were chatting light that, Magialca began her speech on a stage deep inside the hall.

Her appearance was her usual unique outfit, but her cheeks were visibly red from drunkenness. It seemed she was already sloshed.

「The extermination of the revived seven Ragnarok as well as the capture of Avalon's surface level floor are truly great achievement. You can rest your body enough during these three days. It's only a little bit more until the time of the conclusion.」

Magialca only said that and returned to her table once more. She was heading to Lolotte's side.

In the end it seemed she had no intention to say what this banquet was for, but they also felt like they somehow understood.

「Something like the pre celebration of victory?」

Soffice was chewing a dry squid with a serious face while appearing behind Lux.

Because her aide and younger sister existence, the Automata Replica wasn't here, she seemed to have spare time by herself.

「Or perhaps, a last dinner thing?」

「Don't say such unlucky thing youu. Even if you cannot read atmosphere at all, that's still too much.」

Furthermore Rosa in her military uniform arrived from beside Soffice.

Perhaps it was just as expected. Even the Seven Dragon Paladins were

gathering with Lux at the center.

Singlen was wearing his coat as usual even in this kind of place. He looked out of place.

He was sporting a fearless grin as usual while reclining arrogantly at the corner.

(Eh.....? Singlen's aide isn't here?)

The veteran soldier called Zweigbergk should be at his side constantly. Was he taking command of White Ridge knight order right now?

Lux diverted his focus on that slight doubt, but the answer didn't come out.

「Don't tell me, perhaps this banquet is also Lady Magialca's gambit.」

「Eh.....?」

Lux expressed a question when Aeryl suddenly whispered those words.

However, Aeryl shook her head saying 『It's nothing』. He then returned his attention to the party once more.

Magialca was certainly the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, but at the same time she was also the boss of the company who led the world by the nose.

Was she scheming something to aim at the legacies and technologies of Avalon?

Even if that was what she was actually doing, he wanted to believe that it was only for the sake of profit and she wouldn't do anything bad, but.....

「Suuup, Lux-chi! Maaan, it's feel good to have the whole place reserved isn't it!」

When Lux was thinking about such thing, Tillfur leaped at him from behind.

Looking at her somewhat feverish expression and gaze, it seemed she was also drunk.

「Good gracious, when she become defiant so much like this, it goes past being imprudent and straight into feeling refreshed. Seeing how many of the elites of the new kingdom also became victim, as the daughter of the vice commander I have to act with solemnity though.」

Next Sharis also appeared. Perhaps because of her standing as the leader of the Triad, she didn't drink alcohol and stayed sober.

「Yes. But, it will be meaningless to act solemn if you won't be able to fight when it matters. In any case switching thought and taking a break are necessary. There is no injured soldier here, and the Seven Dragon Paladins too has just gone through time as captive.」

「Well, I think there won't be any problem if you just push the responsibility to Captain Magialca when it come to it.」

Airi whose cheeks were somewhat red said such thing with glassy eyes.

It was a statement that was slightly unlike Airi, but perhaps her reasoning was melting because of the alcohol.

When Lux approached her worriedly, she jumped him as though to entrust her back on him.

「Wai-, Airi. Could it be you are drinking too much?」

Airi sent an upward gaze at Lux and continue to talk casually.

「That's right, Nii-san have a problem with that? This is the fault of Nii-san who continued to make me worry though. That's why it's fine if Nii-san also feel worried for a bit about me.」

「A, haha.....」

Lux spontaneously smiled wryly seeing Airi's sullen look.

Airi who originally was a civil official candidate had come running until this kind of battlefield, so surely her feeling of worry wasn't just at the normal level anymore.

Thinking about that, Lux felt apologetic, but this would be the last time.

The fight against the Lord would be concluded, and the Sacred Eclipse stopped.

With that, surely there wouldn't be anything more that troubled his little sister.

「I was hesitating whether I should say it but.....recently I was investigating

about Fugil-niisan little by little. Most of the documents of old empire aren't remaining, even so I thought that I would be able to find something.」

Airi suddenly whispered that with a drunk face.

Lux was taken aback by the subject. Airi continued her words with a small voice.

「I also tried investigating the family tree and also documents like the record of proceedings but, there was nothing particularly odd in them. There is no such thing remaining in the records, to the degree that it's unnatural. But, there is only one point that bothered me.」

「And that is—」

With a glance, Airi's gaze turned toward Singlen's direction.

She confirmed that he is tilting his wine glass into his mouth without paying attention their way, and then she resumed her talk.

「It was only by chance but, when I was trying to look at the family tree of the past five hundred years ago, I found Fugil-niisan's name recorded several times. A second son, the emperor's nephew, or an uncle, his standing is varied but, he showed his figure many times in the history of Arcadia Empire.」

「.....!? What does, that mean?」

When Lux asked back with a dubious face, Airi also closed her eyes and tilted her head.

「Nii-san is making a completely uncomprehending face there. Well, I myself doesn't thing that in itself is particularly strange. After all it often happen among the royalty for someone to succeed the name of an ancestor.」

Certainly it was just as Airi said.

Besides, it was unthinkable that Fugil was taking part in the entirety of this matter.



It was something impossible without eternal life span. Besides, the standing and post of these people with the name of Fugil were relatively low for being involved in Arcadia Empire.

But, Airi wouldn't intentionally bring this up if she really thought that this was just coincidence.

Airi herself had mostly never interacted with Fugil, but she knew about his involvement with Lux.

Thus, she seemed to be harboring great wariness regarding the decisive battle against Fugil that would most likely happen the next time.

「.....Be careful okay, Airi.」

「Yes. Also—well, I guess it will be better to talk about this too. Thinking about this and that before the battle too, surely it cannot be helped.」

「.....?」

Suddenly Airi's tone was mixed with a sigh. She puffed up her cheeks in dissatisfaction.

Perhaps because of her being unusually drunk, different from her usual graceful appearance, her childish emotion was standing out.

「When this battle is over and we return to the new kingdom, Nii-san will meet a terrible experience. Just what are you going to do about those five. It's really troubling.」

「No. Airi, more than that will be a violation of the pact, let's stop there.」

「It's fineee. I have Noct, so Nii-san please, enjoy it to your heart's content.」

Airi's hand was pulled by Noct and she headed to a sofa together with the Triad.

Somehow it also looked like she was drowning her cares in drink but, was she dissatisfied about something?

「Fuuu..... A break! The work won't end! Oi Lux! Keep me company, it was really lonely!」

When Lux was tilting his head, Lisha appeared wearing her white robe. It

seemed she had been doing Drag-Ride maintenance work until now.

From further behind her, Krulcifer, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka, the familiar faces also showed up.

「I see. So that's it.....everyone will surely say it huh. What's more it will be very soon.」

Aeril muttered with a deeply meaningful expression, but Lux was perplexed because he didn't get what she meant at all.

「It's fine for Lux-kun to not know anything. After all it will be a really great surprise for later.」

Aeril said that and cheerfully pulled Lux's hand. Lisha sprang up in panic seeing that.

「Oi you over there! Don't hold hand with Lux as you please! You are also included in the pact!」

「Ahaha. Sorry sorry.」

After Aeril awkwardly separated from Lux, Krulcifer smoothly sent her a cold gaze.

「We cannot let our guard down around you as usual. It's even nastier because you are dressing up your act as natural.」

「Tha, that's right. Although it's this kind of special banquet, we ought to be solemn. It's impolite toward the pioneers who lost their life or wounded in this battle.」

Celis also looked fatigued, but her complexion was better than before due to the full day of rest.

「Lu-chan. I fetched you meal. Let's eat.」

Philuffy who was piling up a mountain of food on her plate like usual was on her own pace as ever.

「Then, we too shouldn't make too much ruckus.」

Lux said that with a smile, and the night deepened while also exchanging pleasant chats with the Seven Dragon Paladins.

After that, he escorted the drunk Airi until the guest room. For some reason Krulcifer and Soffice also came along with him.

「It was really fun. The banquet was a nice diversion.」

「The dishes, were delicious. Kepuh」

Soffice spoke with earnest tone while walking in the stone corridor that had shining lamps on the wall.

Surely it wasn't just his feeling that there was a hint of enjoyment within her expressionless look.

「By the way, it looked like both of you didn't drink alcohol but, putting aside Soffice, why didn't Krulcifer-san drink?」

「My? Geez Lux-kun, I wonder what are you planning after making me drunk?」

Krulcifer who heard that smiled bewitchingly and teased Lux.

After Lux smiled wryly and dodged that, then he faced her once more.

「Then could it be, the two of you have some kind of errand after this?」

「Yes, it's a bit of mission. It's from Captain Magialca.」

「The Heaven Palace that fell nearby, we'll investigate it now.」

「—By Heaven Palace you mean, that airborne ship the Lords were boarding right?」

In the battle just yesterday, that ship was shot down by Magialca's Divine Drag-Ride Jormungandr and it fell on the ground with serious damage.

After that it seemed the Drag-Knights of the alliance army were made to guard it, but there wasn't any sign of the Lord approaching it.

Because it fell nearby this fortress, the enemy too wouldn't intentionally come to recover it.

「It was postponed because our stamina recovery couldn't be predicted. And then, if it is the both of us who are Key's Supervisor, then perhaps useful information can be gathered from that Heaven Palace.」

「In that case I will also come. It doesn't change the fact that it's dangerous.」

When Lux reflexively stated that, Krulcifer smiled and put her index finger on Lux's lips.

「I'll just accept your feeling gratefully. Our Divine Drag-Ride has excellent defense, and we also have spare strength. It's more important for you to rest. After all you will surely be the one to act the most recklessly at the final battle.」

「We also won't do anything excessive so it's all right. I'm happy that you kept me company in the party, Lux.」

Lux waved his hand to the smiling Soffice, then he parted from the two of them.

The tension might be removed because of the banquet, but as expected Lux was worried about what was waiting ahead.

—

Part 6

「Haaah, haaah! Gefuh, gofuh.....!」

The sound of chilly wind *hyuu hyuu* was blowing wildly.

A broken breathing sound was mixed in it.

While Lux and others were spending the night in the fortress, the Lords were warming themselves in a hidden room located at the underground of the destroyed old castle.

There were only simple bed and furniture lined up inside the room. The place didn't look tended at all.

There were only a single living room at the center and three single bedrooms.

There was no problem with escaping difficulty from the falling Heaven Palace, but it was only Hayes who was different.

Regardless of her body that was already dying, she got Baptism applied on her for the sake of participating in the last battle. Her condition was due to the feedback of operating Nidhogg in full strength.

Her life force was worn down, and even tonight it looked like the light of her life would be snuffed anytime.

「My apology, Listelka-sama. The third imperial princess is already.....」

「Is that so?」

Mishis who was nursing Hayes let out a pained voice. Listelka too let out a long sigh.

They did all the treatment they could, but Hayes whose very life force itself was running out was already nearly impossible to be saved.

There was no other choice for her but to see off the death of her little sister.

「It's unfortunate Hayes. I wish to let you see the moment I ascend to the throne but, it seem that wish also won't come true. This might not be a consolation at all but, I will surely obtain Avalon, so please have a peace of mind.」

「Hyuu, haa.....gohah!」

Hayes was already unable to walk or even let out a voice.

The Baptism of life prolonging was showing effect half-bakedly. The result was that she was only pointlessly suffering.

「Mishis. Please accompany me for a bit.」

「Yes.」

Listelka left behind Hayes inside the small room and moved to the living room.

Beside Fugil who was standing near the wall at the side quietly she whispered into the maid's ear.

「It can't be helped now that it have come to this. Please make Hayes to be in peace. She is a troubling child with rough temperament but, she is a little sister who share my blood.」

「.....Understood.」

It was already impossible for Hayes to survive for even three days.

Thus Listelka determined herself, but that voice reached Hayes.

「Gu, haa.....」

She couldn't even raise her voice properly.

Regardless of such condition, Hayes started crawling out from her bed for dear life.

After she put her hand on the gap of the room's window, she rushed out to the passage that connected to the outside world.

—

「Gofuh! Gua, a.....!」

The cold night air was taking away the remains of Hayes's fading life.

Just what was her life?

Hayes suddenly thought that inside her hazy consciousness.

Hayes who was born several hundred years ago as the third imperial princess witnessed the massive killing of the imperial family members by the family of traitor.

The first imperial princess Listelka was the shrine maiden of oracle who received Avalon's revelation.

The second imperial princess Aeryl had the role to convey and execute that revelation.

Originally she had no role at all.

—In that case, she would become the blade that judged the rebels. That was what she decided when she woke up once more.

As one of the Lords who ruled the world, she would protect her pride.

「Gohoh.....ugu, a.....」

Velvet of the rebel army and Balzeride of the four great nobles, furthermore the people who she had a dealing with as illegal arms dealer, the phantom of those people were standing in line beside Hayes who was crawling on the ground. They were looking down on her.

It was finally her turn to have her death be watched by them.

(Why, am I escaping from here? Where am I trying to go.....? Even though I have nothing remaining, why.....) In the end, she was unable to carry out her revenge.

She was unable to make the people of this world realize the existence and power of the Lord.

At this rate, she would die and rot like a small fry without even taking sight of Avalon.

「Gu, oo.....!」

She twisted her body to lie face up, looking up at the dark and cold night sky.

There, a familiar man was standing.

A man with luxurious coat flapping in the wind. Fugil Arcadia.

While he was a member of Arcadia Empire that destroyed and drove away the Lord, he saved Listelka and others who were sleeping in hibernation pods of the Ark, and led them until this far.

Beside him a girl with beautiful appearance—no, Sacred Eclipse was standing.

「You, are, what in the.....」

Thinking back, it was only this man who stayed incomprehensible until the end.

It wasn't just his existence itself that was strange, even his objective was a mystery.

He said that he would serve Hayes and co, and in fact he was acting exactly as he said, but it was as though he wasn't trusting them. At the very least Hayes felt like that.

That was the reason why Hayes loathed Fugil, but why did he appear now when she was dying like this?

「Even Elixir won't be able to stop your body's destruction anymore. You will run out of strength within a few more minutes, become ash and vanish from this world. But you have good luck. Your empty life. You who don't know of a way to express yourself other than by venting your hatred. It seems she is extending a hand toward the resentment of such you.」

「.....You, bas, tard, who, are you.....?」

「—A hero.」

Looking at Fugil's bottomless smile, Hayes felt a repulsive shudder despite her dying body.

「Therefore Hayes, I will ascertain your fate with my own eye. If that wish is something true, if you are chosen by Sacred Eclipse, then I will obey her and fulfill your wish.」

「.....」

The girl in dress, Sacred Eclipse who possessed the silver hair of Arcadia family grabbed the hand of Hayes who collapsed and vomited blood.

Right after that, Sacred Eclipse's body melted like light and overlapped with Hayes who was about to become ash.

Before long the silhouette of the two became one along with a strange sound, and then they left.

—

「—Fugil, you are here?」

Three minutes later, the maid Mishis who climbed up the hidden stair and came out called out to Fugil who was leaning on a ruined rampart.

「Yeah, there was a bit of sound, so I came to check the situation just in case. There was nothing though.」

「Did Hayes-sama came here? It seems she sneaked out from her room, but she didn't have long, so she might have become ash already though.」

「No, unfortunately I haven't seen her.」

「Is that so. More importantly, Listelka-sama is calling. About that plan—by catching an enemy and applying Baptism to them, that person might be controlled by the Sacred Eclipse then.」

「Got it. I'll depart right away.」

The dark cloud left and Fugil looked up to the starry sky. His expression was bright.

—

Part 7

That night, Lux couldn't sleep because he was feeling uneasy. He was staring at the ceiling of the guest room.

Krulcifer and Soffice who investigated Heaven Palace returned safely, but it seemed they didn't obtain any useful information.

However, there was a strange trace of destruction in the airborne ship. There was a possibility that a part of the information terminal was taken away.

(Just what does that mean.....)

Of course there was a possibility that when Listelka and others escaped, they thoroughly destroyed the information.

But, a bad premonition that couldn't be expressed with words wouldn't leave Lux.

「It's useless even if I worry about it. Let's sleep.」

The moment he whispered that and relaxed his body, *kii* a faint sound could be heard.

「Eh?」

Lux was curious and opened his eyes. There was a warm sensation inside his blanket.

「Oo, that's a really fast reaction you have there. Now then you, you are holding hope of me coming to your sleeping quarters huh?」

「Wai-!? Captain Magialca!?」

A petite girl wearing black camisole was already under Lux's blanket when he noticed.

The moment Lux noticed that fact and tried to scream, his mouth was quickly blocked by a hand.

「Don't make a ruckus, the people around will wake up.」

「Wha, what!? What in the world are you planning!?!」

「Haa, you are a boring man as usual. But, a guard this hard might be more exciting in a sense.」

She said with a really delighted smile on her face.

「Err....., can you tell me your business quickly?」

Lux sighed in exasperation at Magialca who was showing a bewitching smile.

Her age was around the same like Relie, but her appearance was like a young girl so it made his heart pounded hard.

Furthermore he also held a nervousness toward this woman because he simply couldn't let his guard down against her.

Even though the door should be locked, she still entered without almost any sound. She wasn't an ordinary person.

「Just now was a test. It was to see whether you have enough attentiveness or not. And then, what I will say from here is an extremely secret matter. You should listen with carefully.」

Magialca then whispered into Lux's ear with her body covering his. Lux gulped hearing what she whispered.

「—Are you, serious?」

When Lux asked back about the content of her terrifying instruction, she answered with a broad obscene grin.

Episode 2 – Avalon, Invasion

Part 1

「Fuu..... This is depressing.」

The next day, Lux woke up early and did light physical exercise and checked his body condition.

Today he didn't do his daily Drag-Ride training to remove his fatigue.

With this it became the second day. It would be one more day before the deep level floor of Avalon appeared.

If the deep level floor's gate appeared, the competition against the Lord would begin from there.

Therefore he was scheduled to participate in the war council for the sake of capturing the deep floor level that Magialca would open at the evening.

Until then he wouldn't be able to calm down even if he just stayed still, so he strolled inside the fortress.

He suddenly felt a presence from the practice ground at the north entrance of the fortress and Lux's feet naturally headed there.

Even though it was the land of a foreign country that was far away from the new kingdom, for some reason he felt a presence that even felt nostalgic.

In the middle of tranquil winter morning, with the Sword Device of Lindwurm in one hand, Celis was practicing her thrust form in her pilot suit.

The soil ground and bricks at the surrounding.

And then a merely vast space where there were only large tree target and large mirror.

There Celis was practicing her thrust silently.

She was concentrating so much that the air felt tense, at the same time sublimity could even be felt from that perfectly serene figure.

She took her stance, fixed her aim, imagined the control of Drag-Ride, and thrust.

When she finished around a hundred of that sequence of action in front of Lux, Celis finally noticed him.

「—Great work, Celis-senpai.」

「Good morning Lux. If you have business with me, you could just call me right away without reservation you know?」

Celis faced Lux and smiled wryly while brushing up her front hair.

She must have been training even before Lux found her. Her healthily tight skin flushed pink, and she was faintly sweating on her whole body.

「No, actually I thought it's better to stop training and rest but, I carelessly forgot to call out.」

Lux also smiled with a troubled look and handed her the towel he brought.

「It's better to wipe the sweat. This is winter after all, you will catch a cold.」

「Thank you very much. Ah, but—I have to take off my suit to wipe myself.....」

「Ah! Tha, that's, it's fine. I will face behind!」

Celis's cheeks reddened in embarrassment. Lux quickly turned his back on her.

「U, understood. Looking here is not permitted okay?」

When there was a faint sound of rustling clothes, Lux closed his eyes just in case.

By the way Lux didn't stop her training because she wasn't wearing Drag-Ride, so the burden should be little, and because he became fascinated watching the

way she polished her heart.

「This training is something like a daily routine after all. Even without using Drag-Ride, I can train my heart by simply polishing my sword skill. It was something taught to me by your grandfather.」

「Was it trained, Celis-senpai's heart?」

Lux threw the appropriate response while inside his heart was pounding hard.

「—Yes. Is what I want to say but, I should stop pretending to be tough in front of you.」

Celis sheathed her Sword Device on her sword belt. The moment she stopped the practice, her body was slightly trembling.

「I am pathetic as the Academy's strongest and Syvalles's captain. In the battle the other day, I was completely helpless in front of that Drag-Knight called Mishis. No, it is not that I'm fearing her. It's scary that I who came to follow you until her as your aide am unable to do anything and accomplish my duty. Surely—」

Lux was slightly perplexed seeing Celis's bitter smile that was unusually fainthearted.

「That's not true.」

He started to say, but Lux noticed something.

Could it be, it was already like this for her all this time since the past?

Perhaps the reason why Celis hammered in training into herself to an excessive degree wasn't just because she couldn't keep up with her surrounding, but her sense of responsibility as someone from the four great nobles also drove her to do so.

That was why, she was trembling like this right now.

It wasn't fear toward powerful enemies. She was suffering from the heavy pressure burdening her.

「My mother, can only give birth to me alone. In the old empire at that time, it was only 『male』 that has value, the tendency was to consider a wife that is

unable to give birth to a son as worthless. That was why I wanted to obtain strength that surpassed male as someone who succeed the name of a famous knight family.」

She didn't want to make her mother who was unable to give birth to a son to feel ashamed.

Due to her kindness since her childhood, Celis thoroughly trained herself and she worked her way up to become the strongest Drag-Knight in the Academy.

In addition with the incident where she lost her master who was also Lux's grandfather, it caused her to focus more and more toward a perfect righteousness, but she broke away from that curse by her encounter with Lux.

「Even after you appeared and helped me regain back my heart, I have been thinking all this time..... Am I a foolish person who is drunk with cornering myself, to escape to something that I decided I should accomplish? Can a sword of someone like me be able to protect everyone—」

She suffered a complete defeat against Mishis who was similarly devoting an absolute loyalty toward the Lord.

It shook even the conviction that Celis had piled up until now.

That was why she was training to polish her heart here.

「Celis-senpai.....」

「I'm sorry Lux. I made you listen to this foolish complain since the morning in the middle of break. I'm disqualified as a senior.」

「Such thing isn't true. Even I, actually—.....-!？」

When Lux immediately raised his voice and opened his eyes, a dazzling sight was reflected in his eyes.

There was a mirror that was hung on the wall for checking one's form. The figure of Celis with the pilot suit on her upper body taken off while she was wiping her body with towel could be seen.

The risqué part was barely out of sight, but the bulge of the voluptuous breasts couldn't be hidden. Each time Celis wiped her sweat with the towel, they would shake. His eyes spontaneously widened.

Because Celis herself was averting her eyes from Lux behind her, she didn't notice that her half naked body was reflected on the mirror.

「Actually, what is it?」

「N-, no! That', it's scary..... What if because of my mistaken decision, everyone will get dragged into it. What if I cannot become of help to other—but」

Lux's heart was pounding hard inside while he continued to avert his gaze from Celis's naked body that was reflected in the mirror.

「Because everyone is with me, right now the scariness become half. If my reason of fighting is also to protect everyone of the new kingdom, then the answer that I sought and wished for might also lead to the same place. That's why, I'm thankful. That Celis-senpai believes in me, and that you became my aide.」

「.....」

「Celis-senpai's aid is necessary for me. Surely Celis-senpai's mother is also happy for your feeling to her. I think she won't say it to Celis-senpai because she surely doesn't want to become a burden to her child but—at the very least, that's what I believe.」

「——」

「Celis-senpai isn't mistaken at all. That feeling of trying to become strong for someone else's sake, that's, it's really beautiful and cool.」

Even he himself became embarrassed saying those words, but he was able to declare it in front of her pure heart.

「Lux, thank you very much. I too, toward you who is straightforwardly kind to anyone even if it is dangerous—」

「Eh.....?」

Lux unconsciously became curious at Celis's tone that suddenly changed and lifted up his face. His eyes met Celis's eyes through the mirror in front of him right at that timing.

The towel she was holding fell and fluttered down, and the girl's half-naked

body entered his sight.

「—!?」

「Wai-! This is, I wasn't intentionally staying quiet about this okay!? I was only unable to get the timing to say it-.....!」

「.....KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!」

An instant later, Celis whose face was bright red until her ears raised a shrill scream inside the fortress.

The guards who came running right after that were in wonder, while Magialca who arrived last showed an exasperated smile while saying 「Again huh」.

—

Part 2

A few hours after parting from Celis.

Lux was walking inside a corridor with a conflicted look.

Celis's tension seemed to be cleared already nicely, but a complicated atmosphere was left between the two of them.

It was the truth that there was no chance to say about the mirror, but it was Lux's bad for looking, so he had to apologize to her when this battle was over.

Lux sighed 'fuu' lightly, then a small footsteps came to his side.

「Good afternoon Lux-kun. Is your body's condition all right?」

「Ye, yes. Today I'm really in a good condition.」

Aeril had been released from the dungeon thanks to Magialca. Lux also returned a greeting meeting her like this.

But Lux tilted his head when she peered into his face wonderingly.

「Isn't that right? It looked like this morning you also had done something really enjoyable after all. By the way what happened with the pact again?」

「A, ahahaha..... I don't really know much about this pact after all.」

Lux responded with a dry smile at Aeril's suggestive smile.

It seemed she knew about that case with Celis this morning. Perhaps she heard it from Magialca.

This was Aeril, so surely she wouldn't speak about it to Lisha and others, but having a secret of his taken hold like this was scary in a different meaning.

While thinking of such thing during his walk, the door of the war council room that was at the end of the passage came into view.

When he opened that door, a man was sitting right at the front.

「.....-!」

「What's the matter? How about giving a greeting at least? Or perhaps even you also have a vanity as former royalty in you?」

The figure in coat sitting deeply on a chair with his legs folded was the Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit.

It was unexpected that he was the first one to come. It caused Lux to be spontaneously surprised, but the reason why Lux fell silent wasn't just that.

「Please excuse our impoliteness Sir Singlen. But, I think wearing a hood even inside a room is even more impolite you know?」

Aeril turned aside Singlen's bold provocation with cheerful smile.

「Hou, the speed of your change in attitude is admirable. Are you thinking that you have been forgiven just because your shackles were taken off?」

But, the opponent also was a man who wouldn't keep quiet just from that much.

He attacked further with a tone that was mixed with sarcasm.

「I don't even have any defense in regard to that point, but I intend to proof myself by responding to everyone's kindness toward me.」

「I see, only the thickness of your face's skin is really something. Still, I don't know about that blockhead companion of your over there, but don't think that a lip service of someone of your level will work against me.」

When Singlen grinned scornfully while saying that, Lux objected in Aeril's place.

「Please watch your words Sir Singlen. I want you to take back your insult toward her.」

「Insult you said? Now this is strange, even though she had tricked us once already, but even now she is still hiding something. How is she planning to make excuse about that?」

Singlen's sharp gaze stabbed toward Aeril.

「-.....?」

What was this about hiding something?

When Aeryl looked slightly shaken toward that, the door of the war council room was opened hard.

「You already got into argument in broad daylight huh, Blue Tyrant. You are a nagging man as usual.」

The one who entered inside the room was Magialca and her aide Lolotte.

Moreover even the remaining members of Seven Dragon Paladins also arrived.

「I'm only probing some to kill time. I think it's only natural to be wary toward this stubborn traitor though?」

「Aaa, enough with that. The war council is starting so you just shut up.」

After Magialca said that in irritation, Lisha and others, the members of Syvalles also gathered.

Inside the war council room where more than ten people in total had gathered, Magialca first raised her voice.

「Ladies and gentlemen. Looks like you all have taken the minimum rest. I know it's severe but this the last battle to save the world. I'll have all of you fights hard without exception. You all have resolved yourself haven't you?」

「There ain't no need to ask that at this point right? The resolve of the bunch who held banquet in this kind of dangerous place is obvious.」

Greifer said that with a negligent tone. Everyone also nodded wordlessly at that.

One month remaining until the predicted world destruction. If they didn't reach the central of Avalon ahead of Listelka and stopped Sacred Eclipse, they wouldn't have any future.

Lux also returned a confirming gaze as though it was only natural. Magialca nodded in satisfaction.

「Nice reply. Then, we will hold the strategy meeting to take away Avalon from now. Aeryl, I'll leave the explanation regarding that to you.」

「Yes.」

First Aeryl who was called by name stood up and she lightly looked around.

After her eyes met Lux at the end, she took a deep breath and formed her words.

「After this, Avalon's deep level floor will appear nearby the site of the old castle in this abandoned capital Guernica. But, even me who is an imperial family of the Lord doesn't know its true shape.」

「What do you mean? Isn't that strange?」

The Seven Dragon Paladins who represented Heiburg Republic, Rosa turned a dubious face at Aeryl's words.

Furthermore Celis who was sitting also tilted her head and spoke a question.

「It's also baffling for me. Weren't all of you Lords living in Avalon?」

「For us, Avalon is treated like a sacred place. Even though my elder sister Listelka can receive revelation of oracle, fundamentally she won't enter inside. In the first place the imperial capital and the Ruins served the role as our living place already.」

「But, you are an imperial family member right? Then you should have entered some holy ground like a temple once or twice.」

When the youngest person there, Mel pointed that out frankly, Aeryl shook her head.

「In the first place it was forbidden to enter Avalon. Even an imperial princess couldn't enter it so easily. It was only my elder sister Listelka who has experience of entering, but the way to enter inside should be already different from the past.」

「What do you mean by that yeah?」

Greifer immediately retorted. Aeryl formed her words after hesitating slightly.

「To open the path toward the central of deep level floor—so to speak the control room, there are several requirements. In order to clear those, a blood relative of us Arcadia Empire is necessary.」

「You mean the three names here huh.」

When Magialca said that as though to remember something, everyone there looked around.

「—Yes. In our camp, there is me, Lux-kun, and Airi-san. These three people are the one with the authority that can interfere with the mechanism at central. To fulfill the requirements, we have to follow the instructions of Avalon's Gear Leader—Arshalia.」

「There is also an Automaton in Avalon?」

Aeril nodded at Lux's question.

Then, Lisha leaked out a sigh in tired exasperation.

「So we will have to let an Automata guide us again? Will that girl appear nearby that old castle?」

「Yes. Perhaps the Gear Leader herself will become the key of the central.」

Everyone's gaze gathered the additional comment of Soffice who was a Key's Supervisor.

「I also pretty much has read the books in the seventh Ruin Moon. We will have to find that Gear Leader, follow her instructions and make the preparation. If we do that then the control room will come into view. —But, there is one more strange information that I don't know about. The foundation of Avalon, the Ruin's Zero, an existence that is called as transformation Drag-Ride.」

「Transformation, Drag-Ride.....?」

—Lux wondered why. He strangely felt that he had heard those words before. But, he couldn't recall.

The more he thought about it, his memory was vanishing like mist.

「Lu-chan. Are you sleepy?」

「No. I'm fine, Phi-chan.」

Lux returned to his senses when Philuffy who was sitting beside him talked to him. Aeril continued her story.

In the end first they had to discover Avalon's Gear Leader, then one person among Lux, Aeryl, or Airi would have to perform the protocol into the mechanism as instructed. That was the requirement.

「Looks like we won't understand the requirements until that Automata come out. Then in order to raise the chance of us encountering her, we should split into team.」

There was no one who raised objection at Magialca's proposal. Like that they formed four teams.

—

First team was Lolotte, Zweigbergk, White Ridge knight order, the Triad.

The second team was Aeryl, Greifer, Mel, Soffice, Rosa, Magialca.

The third team was Airi, Lisha, Krulcifer, Philuffy, Celis, Yoruka.

The fourth team was Lux, Singlen.

—

「The objective of the first team is to defend this fortress. The weakness is the few number of Divine Drag-Ride user in this team, but surely the enemy also won't have any leeway to attack here. Therefore we are going to leave the minimum battle force here.」

After that, Magialca began to explain about the role of each team in order.

She deliberately omitted a part, but the three people with Arcadia bloodline were separated from each other in order to clear the requirement of getting instruction from the Gear Leader.

The Key's Supervisor might also be able to at least talk with Automata, so Krulcifer and Soffice were also in separate team.

「Next the second team and the third team, well, these two teams are the main for conquering Avalon. It will be easier if the teammates has trusting relationship with each other, so I split the members like that.」

「I wish to accompany Aruji-sama though?」

Yoruka smiled brightly and casually insisted that.

She was a girl who wouldn't read the atmosphere like usual, but this time even Lisha joined her.

「Well, this ero woman is extreme but....., why is it only the fourth team that has only two people in it? I think the combat force should be divided equally here.」

Lux was also in agreement regarding that, but Magialca responded with a wry smile.

「That's a good question princess. But I won't accept any selfishness here. Those two are different from the second and third team, their role isn't just to search for the deep level floor, they are also charged with an important role.」

「Don't tell me—」

The moment Celis made a dubious face, the answer came.

「That's right, I'll have the fourth team to move with the priority of exterminating the enemy. Well, in case they encountered Listelka's force, they'll have to attack proactively.」

「—!」

Silent tension ran through everyone who gathered inside the war council room.

Right after that, Aeri was the first one to react by raising her hand.

「That's dangerous! You should have known that in the enemy's camp, the maid Mishis and most likely Fugil Arcadia too are powerful enemies. Having only two people to face them is.....」

Krulcifer quickly continued after Airi's tense voice.

「She is right. It's certainly dangerous. Both Sir Singlen and Lux-kun are strong but, the remaining enemies should be substantially powerful too. At the very least one Divine Drag-Ride user from each team should be moved to their team.」

「Well, your objection is reasonable.」

But, Magialca responded with an exasperated shrug toward their advice.

「However have you two forgotten? Only in this situation we won't be able to prioritize safety anymore. After all if the enemy obtains Avalon, it will be our defeat by that time. Since that the case we can only make a gamble.」

「Is there anything that we can obtain by making the fourth team clash against the enemies?」

Lisha flared up. Magialca looked down and nodded in respond.

「Our advantage is our number which is far greater than the enemy. There is no option not to make use of our edge toward the enemy. While the attack of the fourth team will have effect in holding them back, the enemy too won't be able to ignore them seeing that someone with Arcadia bloodline is attacking them, so they will be held back for certain. During that time, the second and third teams will split to search and our probability in reaching the central will rise.」

「.....」

「The Lord, Listelka who only have two close aides remaining won't easily let them get too far from her correct? Then this strategy should be the most effective.」

Certainly, Listelka only had Mishis and Fugil to guard her right now, so surely she wouldn't send them away.

Hayes who was defeated by Aeryl the other day shouldn't have any more spare strength, essentially Mishis and Fugil were the only combat force of the other side.

Furthermore facing the Anti Drag-Knight Mishis who possessed Azi Dahaka, there was the possibility that having her surrounded would only caused her opponents to be defeated altogether.

In that case it would be preferable to just leave her to a small number of elites, Lux and Singlen alone.

It was a battle formation that managed the risk and didn't let go of the chance of victory.

In that case they had to accept this team division.

「It will be fine Airi. This will be the last time I make you worried.」

「There is also that but..... No, I understand.」

When Lux showed his acceptance, Airi swallowed back the opinion that she was about to say.

What she held back from saying was most likely about Singlen.

There was no doubt that he was powerful, but he possessed an ambition that counterbalanced his strength. Until now he had approached Lux many times to make use of him.

Furthermore, from his battle with Yoruka, it was discovered that there was a sign of Singlen receiving Baptism in the past. Half his body was adapted to Elixir.

She couldn't speak out that behind the scene circumstance, but because of that too she was really wary of Singlen in a team alone with Lux.

But, Lux had already heard from Magialca that it would become like this.

He had already resolved himself too.

「Then, I will move on to the main subject of the strategy. You all better listen attentively.」

First Magialca gave instruction to everyone about their action's objective, the members also questioned her about that.

The meeting went for several hours. The members of each team also talked among themselves, but Singlen didn't say a single word.

「.....」

Lux would dislike it if Singlen was giving order high-handedly, but when this man was staying quiet with that fearless grin on his face, it was scary because it felt like something not decent would happen.

「Sir Singlen, how are you planning to carry out this mission?」

Lux briefly addressed Singlen who was sitting at the corner but,

「Are you that stupid? Looks like you still haven't come out from the mindset of being hired chore boy huh, hero-dono.」

He responded with familiar tyrannical sarcasm like that.

「What kind of plan you asked? It's meaningless to just think in this situation. There are too much aspects that we shouldn't know about, it will be pointless if we just create a strategy. If we drown ourselves in supposition, we won't be able to respond flexibly instead you know?」

「.....」

「Our mission is to subjugate the first imperial princess Listelka. We just need to focus in accomplishing that by using every method available depending on the situation. That's all there is to it.」

His tone was arrogant like usual, but what he was saying was right on the mark.

But, Lux wondered why he felt strangeness from the points of his words.

Singlen didn't say 『don't know』, but 『shouldn't know about』.

The way he talk it was like even the things that Lux and others didn't know about were known by him.

But, Lux too couldn't carelessly probe deeper here.

Because he had received a secret order from Captain Magialca in regard to Singlen.

Last night, Magialca who sneaked inside Lux's room unnoticed told him—.

—

Part 3

「What do you mean? Telling me to watch Sir Singlen like that.」

Inside the guest room that was assigned to Lux. Magialca who slipped into his bed grinned widely in her black underwear appearance.

「Don't speak loudly. If other people come inside, I will cover up this as you being in the middle of love affair with me you know?」

「.....」

She sounded joking, but her lowered voice volume told him that she was serious.

In other words this was really an important topic that he couldn't say to other people.

「You have heard that the two came back empty handed after investigating the Heaven Palace right? It seems that the information terminals of those guys were destroyed, and not even a single one remained. Then, do you have an idea of who did that?」

「.....」

Magialca brought her face closer until a distance where they almost kissed. Lux pondered for a bit and answered.

「.....Was it Singlen's aide, Sir Zweigbergk?」

「So you noticed as expected, the reason why his aide wasn't present in that banquet.」

Zweigbergk was Singlen's aide and his loyal servant.

Even if he was focusing on his duty to protect the fortress, it was unnatural that he didn't show his face even once in the banquet.

Therefore, there was a possibility that he was investigating Heaven Palace

during that time when everyone wasn't paying attention.

But, what was Singlen who wasn't even a Key's Supervisor trying to hide by destroying the remaining information terminals?

In the first place, there was a high possibility that he and his men couldn't even confirm what kind of record might be remaining in the terminals, and yet...

「You are curious whether there was something that he obtained when he was doing his own investigation right? But, I predict that he has a completely different objective. He doesn't want us to obtain information of Avalon even more than this. Even if the likelihood is really unlikely.」

「—Destruction of evidence, is it something like that? For what?」

Lux asked back nervously. Magialca's smile deepened in response.

「I don't know. But you have heard from before about that guy's personal ambition right?」

「.....」

The words that he heard along with Mel and Greifer too when they first met Singlen together.

The establishment of a new country that unified the world by the Drag-Knights.

Singlen boasted about creating an independent organization that was completely different from the existing power of royalties and nobles, and led the world to peace.

Until now Lux thought that it was realistically impossible, but it was a different matter if there was Avalon.

From the battles until now, it could be easily imagined that Avalon was hiding that much power, including armed might and unknown technologies to achieve such thing.

「That guy is a strange existence, it seems he also received Baptism in half of his body, and it seemed he also got acquainted with that Fugil since ten years ago. There are a lot of things he is hiding from us.」

What was terrifying was the existence of Magialca who had investigated until that far.

It seemed this person who was the owner of the large company that was active all over the world and also an expert of martial art had gathered as much information as possible until now.

On top of that she was on guard against Singlen and gave a secret command to Lux.

「And, what are you planning to make me do?」

「Ku-ku-ku. Being sharp is a virtue but, it will be better if you can hide your emotion from your expression a little more. You will be seen through by that guy like that you know?」

「By saying that, don't tell me—」

「Yes. I'm telling you to watch that guy in Avalon. If Singlen try to hog Avalon for himself and cause something, you stop him. In the worst case, kill him.」

「——」

Magialca gave the command with a smile that was tinged with shadow.

While Lux was dumbfounded, Magialca quietly went out of the room.

—

Part 4

「Will I really be able to stop him? That man—」

Lux was spending his time on the bed of his room at the last day of rest while recalling all that had happened until now.

Tonight, or perhaps at the early morning tomorrow, the deep level floor of Avalon would appear and the capture would begin.

Even though the decisive battle with Fugil was already a heavy burden in his mind, now he was even imposed with the dangerous mission of obstructing Singlen's ambition too.

It was unclear whether Singlen was really scheming to monopolize Avalon, but certainly he also couldn't be left alone.

Even if Singlen monopolized Avalon, if the bloodline of Arcadia was needed for that, he would be trying to use Lux for that.

He would use that instead to investigate Singlen's true intention, and depending on his answer Lux would stop him as commanded.

It would be extremely dangerous to probe that man, but it was something that had to be done.

Singlen in full power was so strong that even Yoruka using Over Limit wasn't his match, but it was better than exposing Airi to danger.

Besides, if Avalon could be captured by the alliance army, then after ordering Sacred Eclipse to stop, Magialca said that she would first give Lux the right to use it.

At that time as reward for Lux, it seemed she would give priority for the treatment to remove the influence of the Abyss remaining inside Philuffy's body.

『Are you thinking it's a foul play that I'm using my disciple's life—or rather your childhood friend as negotiation material? But, most likely you are the only suitable person to probe Singlen's true intention and also to stop him. Won't you accept this mission even knowing the danger?』

He had no choice but to do it after getting told like that.

Lux who was immersed in his thought on the bed suddenly felt discomposed in his chest.

His brain was stirred up along with intense ringing in the ear. His heartbeat was quickening.

「U, gu.....」

Like that his consciousness was sucked into the abyss of darkness.

—

Part 5

「—x-kun, Lux-kun. Wake up!」

「N, nn.....」

An androgynous and soft voice made Lux woke up with a slight groan.

It seemed he had fallen asleep without noticing. He was being shaken by Aeryl on his bed.

「Aeryl? This place—」

「It's Lux-kun's room. There was no reply so I was worried. As I thought, are you tired? It looked like you were having nightmare.」

「Perhaps, so.」

Lux smiled wryly without confidence.

When he confirmed the time at his pocket watch beside the pillow, it was six in the morning.

Originally it was a time when Lux would have woken up a long time ago, but he was embarrassed about waking up late because of nightmare so he didn't say it.

By the way Aeryl came here was because she was let out from the prison by Magialca and given instruction to wake up Lux.

「More importantly Lux-kun, are you alright? Do you have strange headache or something?」

「What do you mean?」

Lux asked back to Aeryl who looked anxious. The girl with braided hair let out a relieved sigh.

「It's nothing. More importantly, there is something that I want to confirm.

Will you come with me?」

「Okay.....」

Aeril went out of the room first and Lux changed into his pilot suit, then she guided him not to the war council room but to the upper stair.

「—Tsu, this is.....!？」

The members of Seven Dragon Paladins and also Lisha and others had changed into their pilot suit and gathered here, but Lux was overwhelmed by the surrounding sight before he could call out to them.

At the other side of the fortress—near the site of the destroyed old castle, a vast city was appearing.

Chalk white buildings made from marble, abundant greeneries and trees, and then, a towering castle deeper inside.

The place that was a ruin until yesterday was changing into something completely different.

This old fortress that was safely remaining was changing into an existence that stood out from the surrounding instead.

「As I thought, Lux-kun is also seeing the same thing.」

「What is happening? Where were we moved to? No, could it be.....」

Seeing the figures of people that were visible at the distance, Lux became speechless.

The people coming and going on the street, they all had silver hair and grey eyes.

The unique features of Arcadia clan.

「Don't tell me this place is, Arcadia Empire!？」

The moment he yelled that, a voice could be heard inside his head.

「—It's exactly as you said, o descendants of my bloodline.」

It wasn't Aeril who answered.

Someone suddenly appeared at the center of the fortress's rooftop where

everyone was gathered.

It was a beautiful girl wearing silver dress who seemed familiar.

It was the appearance of the strongest and greatest Ragnarok that was called Sacred Eclipse.

「Please get away Lux! It's dangerous!」

「—Wait! She isn't Sacred Eclipse. She is the Automata we are looking for.」

Cleis immediately wore Lindwurm and guarded Lux, but Aeryl stopped her in panic.

While everyone was bewildered, Philuffy suddenly reached out her hand to the mysterious girl.

「Wai-, what are you doing airheaded girl. Don't touch her carelessly!」

「It feels strange because there is no presence but, she cannot even be touched. Looks like it's transparent.」

Lisha immediately warned, but Philuffy kept her absentminded expression and didn't move away.

Just as she said, the hand Philuffy reached out passed through the body of the mysterious girl, proving the uncertainty of that existence.

「Illusion? No, this is—」

「O descendants who obtained qualification. You all did well to struggle through the Ruins and return to this land. My name is Arshalia. The duplicate of the ^{Lord} creator who created the mechanism of Avalon along with the ^{Xfer} Key's Supervisor.」

Amidst the confusion, the illusion girl who was like a ghost was speaking with indifferent tone.

She possessed exactly the same appearance like the Sacred Eclipse, but different from the Ragnarok, no repulsive malice could be felt from this girl.

In exchange she possessed the robotic sign that was peculiar to Automata and the distinctive mechanical horns on her head.

「This place is without a doubt the deep level floor of Avalon. The surrounding

scenery is the reproduction of the land and view where we the clan of Lord was living at, it's a projection. This is only shown by interfering with your perception. They have no substance.」

「You are saying all of this is illusion? Avalon's ancient technology is really something isn't it?」

Rosa was grinning boldly even with her surprise. Greifer also expressed his opinion with an exasperated look.

「Really, this is a terrifying thing yeah. No matter how I look, it ain't a power that human can manage.」

「So Arshalia whatever. Seeing that the deep floor level is manifested here, is it fine to believe that we have already arrived at the central?」

「.....」

Arshalia didn't answer Magialca's question, she didn't even give her a glance.

Rather than ignoring or rejecting, it looked like she didn't even hear Magialca's voice from the beginning.

Airi tilted her head while muttering timidly.

「What's the matter? Are you unable to converse with us?」

「If you have a question then I will hear it, my descendant.」

「—!?!」

At that moment, the Automata Arshalia that seemed to be a three-dimensional projection turned toward Airi suddenly.

Everyone who saw that similarly guessed the reason.

「It won't react at all if the other party isn't Arcadia family?」

What Soffice pointed out was most likely correct.

After all the three-dimensional projection that was called Arshalia didn't even react at all toward the question of her who was a Key's Supervisor.

「Then Arshalia, I will ask a question. What should I do to reach you who is connected to the center of deep level floor and obtain Avalon?」

Aeril immediately talked to the projection. Arshalia turned toward her and began to talk.

「Originally, only the qualified person who arrived at this place first can obtain Avalon. But, at this occasion there are a total of six qualified people. Thus, I'm thinking to measure their character and decide from that.」

「Measuring character?」

Mel muttered with a dubious expression, but the Automata Arshalia only continued her words indifferently.

「In order to obtain Avalon, considerable preparation is necessary from the qualified people. Please confirm this history recording of Arcadia Empire and prepare the worthy caliber. I will recognize the person who accomplish it first as my master.」

「I cannot grasp the gist no matter what. What does she mean by preparation, what do we have to do?」

Lux also had the same question with Celis and he asked it.

Right after that, the surrounding scenery changed.

「—This is!?!」

The people were vanishing from the castle town of Arcadia Empire that was bustling and flourishing until now.

A silence that was vaguely eerie was enveloping the surrounding.

「Please wander around the castle town and withstand three trials till the finish. I who govern the central will be waiting at the end. Well then, I pray that you can reunite with the main body of the Gear Leader.」

Arshalia only said that in the end and the projection vanished.

There was only silence remaining in the area.

「Is it something like pilgrimage travel before the ceremony? So we are made to do incomprehensible thing even after coming this far. I got no interest to study history though.」

Greifer let out an unmotivated voice and concluded the situation.

Putting it simply, the people of Arcadia clan who possessed qualification in this place were imposed with three trials.

By following the history of Arcadia that was recorded in Avalon while completing the trials, it seemed Lux and others would obtain the qualification to reach the central.

Just as Greifer said, they first had to search for those trials.

「I understand now but—this is bad isn't it?」

Beside Lux who was digesting the information, Krulcifer raised a vigilant voice.

「Originally we who have the number to split into three teams should be in advantage. But, if Listelka know the route and method to pass these trials, we will lose this competition if we don't go right ahead to obstruct them.」

「.....」

Krulcifer's worry was spot on.

If it was Listelka who was able to interfere with a part of Avalon's system, that possibility couldn't be denied.

「Fumu. What do you think about that? The Lord here?」

Magialca was calm even then and she asked Aeryl with a smile.

Aeryl hesitated slightly, then she spoke the answer.

「As far as I know, even Nee-san shouldn't have that much interference ability, but there is also a high chance that she was lying even to me. I believe it will be surer to obstruct them.」

「Then it's decided. We will split into three teams and searched around, received the trial, and obtained the qualification. But, as soon as anyone discovers Listelka, contact the fourth team to have them attack. It will be ideal if you can subdue or kill them, but in the worst case it will be fine if you can just hold them back.」

The fourth team—that was to say the pair of Singlen and Lux.

It was something that had been planned from the beginning, but it didn't change the fact that they had to face the most dangerous duty.

In addition of the Anti Drag-Knight Mishis, a direct confrontation with Fugil who was concealing immeasurable strength and mystery was also waiting.

「Nii-san, do you notice? The Automata just now, she said that there are six people with qualification in this place—」

Lux nodded at Airi.

The descendants of Arcadia family who were here.

People with qualification who had experience installing the Grand Force inside the Ruins originally should be five people only.

Lux, Airi, Aeryl, Hayes, Listelka.

There was the mysterious sixth person, but among everyone here there was only Fugil who could possibly fit the criteria.

But, looking back Fugil should have never installed a Grand Force in a Ruin.

At the very least, there was no such thing in his memory until now.

Then who was the sixth person?

Airi was pointing out that contradiction and puzzle.

It was something that wouldn't be solved no matter how much one thought about it, but it showed that they should be really on guard against Fugil.

「Please be careful Nii-san. Be safe.....」

「Yes. I'll return back for sure, Airi.」

Airi most likely wanted to hold back her brother from leaving, but she looked down with a pained look.

There Lisha and others also gathered and they spoke to him one after another.

「I was working on your Drag-Ride's maintenance even during the rest period! That's why, you absolutely mustn't lose!」

「Let's continue our study when we return. Lately we were really busy with work outside the Academy.」

First Lisha and Krulcifer each grasped Lux's hand and gave encouragement.

Each of his comrades who would be unable to be at his side after this was giving him warm words.

「Lu-chan. Sorry, I cannot be together with you.」

His childhood friend Philuffy only spoke briefly.

Even so her hand that was grasping his hand tightly and her eyes were filled with strong wish for Lux to be safe.

「If Aruji-sama call for me, I will hasten to join your side anytime.」

Yoruka too said that seriously but, surely he wouldn't seek help from her.

After all her fatigue and wound from when she was confronting seven Ragnarok simultaneously were still not healed yet.

And then, at last Lux faced the captain of Syvalles, Celis.

「Lux. I don't know what kind of connection you have with Fugil at the past. But, I will pray. That you will be able to obtain the answer that you desire until now through this battle.」

「—Yes.」

Lux nodded with a flood of emotion filling him. Then he parted from his the girls who were his schoolmates.

And then everyone pulled out their Sword Device and summoned their respective Drag-Ride, wearing them.

Their finished their preparation by also bringing small quantity of food and medicine.

「Then let's go, everyone. We will tackle our last mission from here on. The captain of each team is me, Lizsharte, and then Singlen. Each of you, accomplish your duty—」

Magialca spoke with an expression that was full of confidence, at that instant—.

—

—llllllllll!

—
「.....-!?!」

The strange shrill noise of horn flute resounded in the area and everyone was on guard.

Right after that, countless Abysses appeared in the castle town of Arcadia Empire that fell silent.

Abyss with appearance that was modeled after angel which they had never seen before raised fierce roars and charged.

「—This is!?!」

「Is this also one of the trials? —No, this is Listelka's work. She is simply summoning the Abysses produced from the underground of Avalon's surface level floor.」

While everyone was having their breath taken away, Magialca quickly assessed the situation and spoke out her thought.

When Lux took a stance with his great sword to meet the enemy, Singlen who was near him called out to him.

「Don't get along with their invitation, chore boy. That is just what the Lords expected. Are you planning to slow me down already this early?」

Singlen chided Lux with a high-handed attitude, but it was just as he said.

Whether this was the work of Listelka or they were simply enemies that appeared in deep level floor, if they spent too much time here it would lead to their defeat.

Therefore escaping was the correct decision.

Everyone, don't fight the enemy and shake them off. It seems these things are unique even among the Abysses. Those who bring horn flute, wait until their order run out of time and take control of them instead!]

Everyone nodded at the instruction from the captain Magialca and began to act.

The three teams dispersed from that place and they finally started the

investigation of the deep level floor.

Episode 3 – Reminiscence And Tracing Back the Memory

Part 1

「So, where are you planning to first search at?」

The townscape of the Arcadian imperial capital that was created by illusion. Lux was flying over the area that seemed to be the center while talking to Singlen who was flying ahead of him.

They had escaped from the angel type Abyss for the time being, but their destination after that was unclear.

The Automata told them to complete the trials, but even the method to do it was unknown.

At the same time, Lux asked Singlen to probe him lightly too.

Because there was a possibility that this man knew something regarding the capture of Avalon even though this should be the first experience for everyone.

「Do you feel like dirtying my ear with foolish jokes? Or else, do you have a belief that if it's me then I can answer that?」

In response Singlen was curt.

Not just that, he even gave a warning at Lux's probing.

As expected, traveling alone with this man was nerve-wracking.

But, in reality, perhaps they had no leeway to do this kind of exchange between each other.

Because the objective of the fourth team that was made from the pair of Lux and Singlen was mainly to obstruct Listelka's group.

After they advanced ahead silently for a while, they came to see a single huge building.

It was a round arena that was connected with streets that had a lot of traffic. In front of the building that must be used for mock battles between fellow Drag-Knights, a faint girl's silhouette appeared.

「—!？」

Thinking that it was Listelka or Sacred Eclipse, Lux immediately took a stance with his great sword.

But, when they carefully approached, Lux noticed that it was the figure of a girl that he had seen from somewhere.

「That's, Arshalia!? Is that the real body?」

It wasn't a figure that existed as a projection like just now, the Automata girl was clad in a tight outfit that clung to her body.

Strangely, her presence was thin in a different sense than before.

「I have been waiting, you who possesses a qualification. I am a terminal that was refined with the nanomachine from the main body, here for the sake of assigning a trial.」

「Eh.....?」

Arshalia reacted to Lux and she formed her words dispassionately without emotion.

Unlike the Automata previously, it seemed this one had a material body, but just like El Fajura that once controlled the Ruin Gigas, it seemed it was possible for Arshalia to make a clone body using nanomachines.

「However, why is it? Why does this girl's appearance look exactly like Sacred Eclipse?」

Lux was bewildered. The clone terminal girl continued her explanation in response.

「I will assign your first trial along with the history of the Arcadia Empire and how the Ruins came to be. If you have finished your preparations, please dispel your Drag-Ride and touch me with your own hand.」

「What, do you mean?」

When Lux was hesitating, Singlen rebuked him with an exasperated voice.

「What have you come here for, chore boy? Our priority is to obstruct Listelka, but here we don't have any option not to get closer to Avalon.」

「.....-」

Certainly, the closer Lux got to the center, the more the enemy would be unable to ignore Lux too.

If he was able to quickly finish the three trials, there would be nothing better than that.

Lux was cautious of what would happen, but he steeled himself and dispelled Bahamut. Then he reached his hand towards the girl before him.

Instantly, his field of vision was drowned by a flash, and when he noticed, he was in the middle of a crowd.

「.....This place—?」

When he looked around, there was a person who was crucified at a gallows.

Men and women with hair and eyes of the same color as Lux.

Was this the scene when an execution was carried out in the Arcadia Empire?

While he was thinking so, Arshalia stood right beside him.

「This place, is the trial of the beginning. Trace the history of the Arcadia Empire and be worthy of the holy precincts. The imperial family and nobility of the Lords made use of the special Abyss called Angel since a certain time, and executed criminals as an example.」

The voice of the Automata that was muttering indifferently made Lux gasp in surprise.

He had an idea about the scene that would happen after this in front of him.

When Lux was a child, he saw a scene in the Old Empire. The execution of a rebel—

「Wait a second, don't tell me!?!」

「KISHAaAAAaH.....!」

At that timing, several Abyss appeared from the sky.

Just as explained before, they had the figure of a monster that possessed angel wings.

Even though they should be just three dimensional projections, they had a terrifying degree of realism.

「Stop it-!」

Lux immediately pulled out his Sword Device and raised his voice.

But, the Angles passed through Lux and swarmed the gallows, and greedily devoured the person there alive.

At the same time, the Abyss were also biting Lux who was trying to stop that.

His limbs were torn off, his torso torn up, and his entrails dragged out.

Scream was echoing along with blood splashes, and before long the voice vanished.

「Gu.....! AaaAAAAAH!」

A scream was wrung out from his throat and it echoed inside the illusion.

His whole body felt burning, intense pain and terror that felt like his nerves were torn apart attacked him.

And then, it would not end no matter how long.

Before he realized, his conscience was lost by the pain that span for several days in his bodily sensation.

—

And then, Lux returned to his senses with a gasp.

「-.....!? Haa, haa.....I, returned? This place—」

Lux was gasping for breath. He looked around while wiping his sweat.

The appalling scene that lasted until just now couldn't be found anywhere. He had returned to the scenery of the arena that was simply empty.

He took out his pocket watch and opened it, but not even five minutes had passed in reality.

「The first trial is over with this. Thank you for your hard work.」

The Automata's clone, Arshalia's voice came from beside him.

From her words, it seemed the trial was over.

「Kukuku, what are you being shaken up for? This is just a mere illusion you know? It's only something that happened for real here in the past being reproduced—it's something that you can find anywhere.」

Right nearby, Singlen was laughing with shaking shoulders.

「A rebellion towards the tyranny of the royalty. It's then suppressed by strength. It was a familiar happening that also happened often in your Arcadia Empire right?」

「But, what meaning was there in that scene!? What kind of meaning did this trial have by showing me that kind of thing!?!」

「This is, the ceremony of inheritance.」

The clone of Arshalia that possessed a material body answered Lux's question quietly.

「It's for you to understand the mechanism called Avalon. And then it's also a trial for the sake of measuring the strength of your heart. Your wavelength is slightly out of order, but there is no problem. It appears you possess the strength of mind for the sake of owning the great strength of Avalon. With this you are able to move to the second stage of the trial.」

「.....Ku!」

So the brutal scene and pain of the past was to impose a burden on the mind as a preparation for the second trial?

Hearing that, Lux gritted his teeth. In contrast Singlen was asking with a

fearless grin.

「What's the matter? Is it humiliating? To have your caliber as king getting tested like this?」

「Just what meaning is there in this kind of thing!?!」

Lux was sweating heavily from his forehead while spontaneously yelling to the sky.

He knew only too well that there was a harsh reality in this world.

But, why was it intentionally shown to him under the guise of a trial?

He recalled the Old Empire in the past—his grandfather was executed, while his mother and Airi also met misfortune.

「Hahaha. You will understand it soon. Even this kind of distasteful image is hiding something behind it. This is education. This slaughter is related to the core of Avalon's mechanism. —You still haven't noticed yet? Those Abyss that look like angels.....no, in the first place what was the reason why the Abyss were created?」

「What do you, mean?」

Lux returned a suspicious gaze at Singlen's mocking laugh.

But, the man ignored it as usual with his highhanded attitude.

「I'm not so free that I have the time to teach you from the beginning. Besides, the enemy is already approaching.」

「-.....!?!」

—

—liiiIH!

—

The discordant sound of horn flute cut through the air.

At the same time several angel type Abyss rushed in.

「This is, the continuance of the past recording? —No, wrong!」

Atrocious hostility and gruff breathing.

The whirlwind that was caused by the enemy's roars and wings was undoubtedly real.

「My role is over with this. May luck be with you.」

The clone of Arshalia muttered that while her figure vanished at the same time.

Several angel type Abyss and an ultramarine colored Drag-Ride skating on the passage appeared in her place.

The Divine Drag-Ride Azi Dahaka and, the maid wearing a pilot suit who was driving it.

「So you have finished the trial..... But, I will begin the battle right away. Removing the enemy.」

「Mishis V Xfer.....! Why are you here!?!」

Lux immediately readied his Sword Device and took a fighting stance.

Beside him Singlen sniggered.

「You are asking why? You are stupid at every single thing huh. Even though we are planning to hold back Listelka and assassinate her, why do you think that the enemy won't do anything from their own end?」

「.....-!?!」

Lux gasped inside his heart at what Singlen pointed out.

Listelka too most likely feared getting ambushed the most.

In that case it wouldn't be strange for her to take Lux and others by surprise when they were defenseless in the middle of their trial.

Against Mishis who possessed the nickname of Anti Drag-Knight, all the Drag-Knights would be at a disadvantage.

The worst thing was, the Abyss approaching from the sky took away the option of escaping by flying.

(So she called them here using the flute beforehand for that.....!)

It seemed he was completely being targeted while he jumped to the bait

before his eyes.

Lux sent his gaze towards Singlen to look for an agreement to fight.

(Now that it has come to this, we can only defeat her here.)

Lux tried to convey that resolve, but Singlen scoffed at Lux's intention.

「This must be the instigation of that upstart middle-aged woman. That damn fox.....so she intended like that since the start.」

「.....?」

The moment Lux tilted his head at Singlen's suggestive sentence, a streak of blue light struck the ground. The passage where Mishis was skating was instantly frozen.

When Azi Dahaka leaped to avoid that, countless arrowheads attacked her.

「That's, don't tell me—!?!」

The freezing bullet came from the sniper rifle Freezing Cannon of Fafnir.

The countless arrowheads were Tiamat's projectile weapon, Legion.

As though to support Lux's prediction, Lisha and Krulcifer were hovering right nearby in the sky.

「I see, so Lux is a bait to lure me out alone. —But, it looks like all of you aren't learning.」

First Azi Dahaka was lured to jump by freezing the ground, then the additional attack by Legion came when it was unable to change trajectory midair.

In a glance it seemed to be an attack that was the most suitable against Mishis who was controlling a land battle type Drag-Ride, but she readied her halberd to repel the projectile weapons.

「This is bad! The energy from the Special Armament will be absorbed and their strength will get stolen!」

Lux gulped and he immediately raised his voice.

Azi Dahaka's Divine Raiment Avesta would steal energy from other Drag-Rides and their Special Armaments just from getting near them. And by touching

them physically, even the opponent's Divine Raiment could be obtained.

Furthermore it also had the trait as a land battle type Drag-Ride. It boasted an extremely tough defense.

Thus, a light attack wouldn't deal any damage and it would become disadvantageous later instead.

「Will it really become like that? Everyone who was looking down on us until now had all met painful experiences without exception you know?」

Lisha grinned fearlessly. Instantly, the Legions that were aiming at Mishis in midair from up, down, left, and right turned around and took distance.

In other words, it was a feint to lure Mishis to use Avesta for absorbing energy. Even so Mishis wasn't perturbed by that and caught Lux and the others in her sight.

If there was no obstruction, then she would follow the plan and aim to bring down Lux who was defenseless without wearing armor.

Furthermore her movement went through the shortest and fastest route.

She was in a stance to attack without even giving any time for Lux to summon his Drag-Ride.

「——」

But, when she approached until a distance of ten-odd ml from Lux, Mishis's complexion suddenly changed.

She suddenly swung her halberd right to the side where there was nothing. A high pitched metallic sound of impact rang out.

「—My, so it's a failure. Even though I have erased my presence completely.」

A single Drag-Ride appeared from the empty air as though it was emerging out from the space.

Yoruka clad in Yato no Kami was lurking nearby using camouflage function, and slashed at Mishis right from the side.

Mishis barely blocked the surprise attack, but there was no agitation in her steely expression.

「.....Looks like I'm being belittled if you were thinking that I could be defeated just by that much.」

「Get away from the maid, ero woman! It will be the end if your Divine Raiment got stolen!」

Instantly, the radius of ten-odd meter with Mishis at the center became filled with light that surged from Azi Dahaka.

The hijacking of Divine Raiment by Avesta was avoided by Yoruka with a ^{leap} Step, but Mishis who landed down immediately changed Azi Dahaka's direction and skated, chasing after Yoruka with her halberd at the ready.

The output of the wheels that acted as the driving force of the armored legs was faster than Yoruka's backward leap in the air.

Mishis launched her attack in a flash with no question asked. In that instant, Yoruka flew even further away.

「.....-!」

Mishis who hit empty air regardless of her perfect timing frowned slightly.

「I won't, let you.」

When Lux noticed that Philuffy who was standing by far behind had reeled back Yato no Kami using Typhon's wire, lightning of extreme swiftness prevented Azi Dahaka from attacking further.

Lindwurm gliding in the air was pouring down lightning attack from its Lance—Lightning Flash to down below.

「—That is not permitted. As Lux's aide, I won't let you lay your hands on him.」

Mishis barely avoided the Lightning Flash by abruptly braking her skating. Mishis's movement was finally stopped.

It had only been a few seconds since Lux confirmed Mishis's appearance until this point.

Countless offense and tactics were mixed in this little time.

「So, all five are here? It seems this is a plan to bring me down from the start.」

However, Mishis's tone didn't change even when she grasped the situation.

On the other hand, Lux was blinking in bewilderment.

「What happened!? Why is everyone here—」

「So you didn't notice, chore boy? This feels like something that upstart rich captain would think up. That third imperial princess called Hayes has become useless at the battle the other day. It's not just us who are making a gamble in this battle. They are also the same.」

「.....I see!」

Listelka considered it disadvantageous for her side seeing the number of the qualified people receiving the trial, so she also made a gamble.

The Lords knew more about the information of the deep level floor compared to Lux and the others.

She would hate to be discovered by Lux and the others and had her trials obstructed, so even if she had to risk danger by decreasing the number of her guards, she contrived to send Mishis or Fugil to clash against the enemy.

Magialca who foresaw that secretly gave detailed instructions to Celis and the others to observe over Lux from afar.

Holding back Listelka was the role of Lux and Singlen.

Holding back Listelka's guard who stood in his way to prevent that was the role of Lisha and co.

「We entrusted the task of guarding Airi to the Triad. What, Noct is always using radar to check on the area and avoid battle so it won't be a danger. No worries Lux!」

Lux grasped the situation with the sentence from Lisha.

It seemed Airi was separated from the third team to lead the Triad, while Lisha, Krulcifer, Philuffy, Celis, and Yoruka appeared here to intercept Mishis.

「Try to think. Even that upstart auntie wants to obtain Avalon. With this she left the battle to the other two teams, while she will win the competition by making use of the second imperial princess. Isn't that a plan that will come from

the thinking of a selfish dictator?」

「.....」

It irked him to be hearing that from Singlen who was always acting highhandedly, but the point he made was reasonable seeing from Magialca's instructions.

But for Lux, that was the best thing that he could ask for.

Rather than having Avalon falling into Singlen's hands, it was still better to have Magialca take it.

「But, against that Mishis, even with the five of them—」

「I guess. It's a gamble with long odds.」

Krulcifer also responded affirmatively toward Lux's anxiousness.

「The strongest protector who is a Key's Supervisor and has the nickname of Anti Drag-Knight. We understand that even her strength that we saw the other day still wasn't her full strength.」

「It's also hard to say that we are in proper condition after the fatigue and injury accumulated from the consecutive battles. But—」

「We've no intention, to lose the second time. We won't let her, reach Lu-chan.」

Yoruka smoothly spoke, and then Philuffy continued with a strong tone.

At the end, Celis who was clad with aloof resolve turned a straightforward gaze towards Lux.

「—Lux, please leave her to us, who you have saved until now and grew stronger. As the captain of Syvalles, I will stop her here without fail!」

「Celis, senpai.....」

With those words, Lux's hesitation was severed.

Just like how Lux himself became stronger thanks to them, they also became stronger for Lux's sake.

Leaving this to them would mean answering their feelings.

「So now you feel like abandoning your comrades and going ahead? This might be a parting of a lifetime you know?」

Singlen showed a mocking smile, but Lux was already unperturbed.

「I will stop Listelka without fail, also so that won't happen. That is also your wish correct?」

「Kukuku.....then we are going. It's a waste of time to keep making fun of you like this.」

Singlen chuckled in response and he silently took off with his Drag-Ride.

「Everyone—stay safe.」

「Yes. We will return without fail to your side.」

After exchanging such words with Celis, Lux summoned Bahamut and wore it.

After he took off and left this arena, he searched at a different place for the sake of finding Listelka and the Automata that would give him the second trial.

His destination for the time being was the central plaza of this castle town.

Because he had a hunch that Arshalia's clone was likely to be at the imperial capital's important facility.

「Good prediction. You better head to the next place quickly. Recover back the fragment of your lost memory. If you do that, then you will surely remember the principle of this world when you are reunited with that guy.」

「.....」

Lux didn't react even to the meaningful muttering of Singlen.

He would stop Listelka no matter what happened.

He swore to put forth every effort for that right now.

Part 2

Mishis who saw Lux's escape turned around herself along with the Drag-Ride she wore.

Lisha and the others, the five of them took position around Mishis who was showing signs of escaping.

Above Mishis, the angel type Abyss that were called to gather just now were circling around as though to protect her.

「Oi maid, don't think that you can chase after Lux. We've also finished preparing countermeasures for your Azi Dahaka.」

Lisha turned a confident gaze to Mishis and told her so.

The opponent was the summit of Drag-Knights who easily defeated even the coordination of Celis and Philuffy in the battle the other day, but her fighting spirit didn't decline at the slightest even in front of such enemy.

「I'm reluctant to injure one of the few remaining brethren of mine but—I'll defeat you here.」

Krulcifer readied her sniper rifle with a conflicted emotion leaking out from her.

Philuffy and Celis also took a deep breath and confronted the enemy.

She was an opponent that dealt a complete defeat even against the two of them together the other day, but there was no hesitation in their faces.

They showed no fear or even enthusiasm. They simply sharpened their awe-inspiring fighting spirit.

「There is no more need for words isn't it? Then let us begin.」

Yoruka took a stance with her katana shaped Blade and smiled, but Mishis shook her head silently.

「It's regrettable.」

She looked down slightly and looked somewhat disappointed.

However there wasn't the slightest pity surfacing on her face.

The face of the maid was like steel, showing that she would accomplish her task calmly.

「People like you who are able to handle Drag-Rides to such degree numbered very few even when looking back at history. That's the only thing regrettable from this, that I'll have to get rid of such people without even leaving any of them alive.」

「We have no intention of backing down even if you threaten us at this point. Just like you.」

Krulcifer pointed her rifle's muzzle in response to Mishis's lamentation and replied resolutely.

「Yes, it's unfortunate. All of you surely won't submit. Exactly because you all are people with such resolve, that I will pay my respect. And then—」

The maid only said that before she quietly put the horn flute hanging from her neck to her mouth.

That gesture which had the purpose to give a new order to the Abyss before the previous order ran out of time caused everyone to raise their guard tensely.

「Let's begin. There is no more time remaining. I will make sure of your doom before reporting to my lord.」

「Don't spew out bullshit as you please. We don't happen to have any resolve to recognize defeat or whatever! We only have the determination to defeat you even if it's at the cost of our lives!」

Lisha raised her voice. At the same time the horn flute was blown.

The Angles dancing above Mishis started moving and the battle began.

Part 3

At that time when Mishis and Syvalles began fighting in Arcadia Empire's arena.

The second team that was formed by Aeryl and five of the Seven Dragon Paladins were sensing the signs of fierce battle from slightly far away.

「It looks like the first battle has begun. It will be great if we can also locate the position of Listelka herself but—」

Magialca who was clad with a strengthened type general purpose Drag-Ride EX Drake was leaping forward while smoothly murmuring so.

Aeryl who was flying right beside her immediately focused on those words.

「Do you mean that this situation is also within your calculation, Captain Magialca?」

「Are you dissatisfied, your highness? But this cannot be helped. There is no better plan than this.」

Magialca wasn't wearing her Divine Drag-Ride because of Jormungandr's weak point that it couldn't move once it was deployed on a spot.

Thus, she was wearing a Drag-Ride of the same type, EX Drake, right now and proceeded with the investigation while being vigilant against the surroundings with her radar.

As a result it ended with only a single person not wearing a Divine Drag-Ride at the moment and Magialca could save her stamina, moving the situation in an advantageous direction.

As to be expected from a merchant who built a vast fortune in only one generation, she was shrewd as usual.

Even if in the case that Aeryl arrived at Avalon earlier than anyone, she didn't

know what would be demanded from her, but now wasn't the time to suspect Magialca's ulterior motive.

If they couldn't control Avalon before Sacred Eclipse that had been defeated many times before it revived once more, they would be defeated for sure this time.

「More importantly I'm worried about Airi-chan and the others. After all they are investigating with just the four of them.」

Because the main force of Syvalles, Lisha and the others, the five of them were intercepting Mishis, a team with only Airi, who couldn't use a Drag-Ride, and the Triad was formed.

If the Triad used the strengthened type general purpose Drag-Rides they were carrying, it would be barely possible to intercept or retreat from the Abyss but, if in the worst case they ended up fighting Sacred Eclipse or Fugil, that would be the end.

「It's a gamble. But, that too is the wish of that lass. She wants to be of help to her big brother after all.」

「So you are making use of their bond as siblings? So a captain this absurd actually exists.」

Mel who was flying right nearby looked dissatisfied because she had the experience of her family getting killed by the Abyss.

「Now you are saying a strange thing there, Ymir's lass. It's fine for you because you are resolved, but you are unable to accept other people's resolve?」

Magialca's mouth distorted into a repulsive grin and replied sarcastically.

Certainly, everyone was here knowing the danger, and it was misplaced to deny their determination.

「That's a sound argument, but when it's you saying that I can't be easily convinced yeah.」

「Agreed. But, there is not even time to feel hesitation right now.」

After Greifer muttered carelessly, Soffice also continued after him.

「I can see it noow. Is that our next destination I wonder?」

Just as Rosa said, the church of the Arcadia Empire came into view at the front.

At the same time Aeryl let out a sigh that was laced with nervousness.

She glared to the front while feeling anxiety in regards to the trial and fear towards the approaching footsteps of Sacred Eclipse.

「Lux-kun, Airi-chan. Please be safe—」

Aeryl quietly clasped her hands together while praying.

But, at this time she still had no way of knowing.

That Airi and the Triad who were left behind, were being approached by a different danger than imagined.

Part 4

「Haa, haa..... I saw, a strange dream. I feel a bit unwell.」

「Are you alright Airi? If you are unwell, then returning until the fortress is—」

「I'm all right, Noct. After what I've said before, it would be unsightly to return back after this far.」

On the other side, in the middle of a congested street of the Arcadia Empire, Airi and the Triad were having a rest.

They came into contact with Arshalia's clone in the middle of investigation, and now Airi had just finished the first trial.

They were bringing things like portable food and emergency first aid kit, but they didn't really prepare that much.

Sharis and Noct were on guard against the surroundings, while Tillfur wasn't wearing her armor. She was looking after Airi who was lying down.

「There isn't the angel type Abyss around, but it's possible there is also enemies like Phantom that can erase their presence. Noct, is there no reaction in the radar?」

「Yes. There is no problem. The limit is a radius of 300 ml, so it cannot really be relied on though.」

The EX Drake that Noct was wearing also had its special equipment strengthened.

But, because they were still inexperienced, it was impossible for them to wear the strengthened type Drag-Rides continuously for long, so they made use of a strategy to take rest in turns to compensate for that.

「By the way Airi-chan. Can I ask you what kind of dream you saw?」

「No. Why are you deliberately poking your nose needlessly into that?」

Tillfur showed a smile to calm Airi down, but Noct immediately prevented her to ask further.

In front of Tillfur who looked dissatisfied, Airi silently took a deep breath.

「I'm fine already. It was nothing much. It was a dream of the past, about the day of the revolution in the Old Empire era.」

Airi whose complexion had become better smiled wryly while starting to talk.

Five years ago. The previous day before the Arcadia Empire was destroyed, the empire army kidnapped Airi who couldn't move because she was sick. It was an impossible scene.

The one who commanded that was her father the emperor.

A blade was pointed at Airi in the audience hall as a hostage towards Lux who was attempting to carry out a revolution.

「It's strange. It's impossible. Even though I should have only been sleeping on a bed at that time, even though the battle and everything else should have been over already when I woke up, why is—that kind of dream shown to me now?」

Even though she had never seen that kind of dream even once, it was strange.

「I think that is surely Airi-chan's current feeling. You don't want to become a burden to Lux-chi.」

「Then, that objective has been reached already. After all, currently we are helping him by being out like this.」

Tillfur said that while clenching her fist before her eyes, while Sharis also directed a grin towards the sky.

「If that's the case, then that's great.」

They had formed a plan for when they were taking action with only the four of them.

They wouldn't act reckless no matter what. They would escape from any Abyss and hostiles without exception.

Listelka should be prioritizing to capture Avalon, then she shouldn't chase

after them too far.

The rest was a problem of range.

Just like how a wild herbivore wouldn't approach carnivores until a certain distance, the most important thing was to not overlook the enemy's approach.

But, while they were in the middle of such relaxation at present, Noct suddenly gasped.

「Tillfur! Connect with your EX Wurm! There is a reaction of a Drag-Ride approaching!」

「—!?!」

Airi who was lying sprawled leaped up and Sharis who was hovering midair swooped down.

「One land battle type Divine Drag-Ride. But, this reaction—」

Noct who was confirming further at the radar projection showed a dubious expression.

While Airi and others were standing still in bewilderment, the answer had came near in the blink of an eye.

Land battle type Divine Drag-Ride with thick and gnarled armor, Tarasque.

The one wearing it wasn't someone on the enemy's side.

It was a man past middle-age with a tall and lean body, his eyes hidden by a helmet, Zweigbergk Gimle.

「That's—the aide of Sir Singlen?」

When Sharis muttered in bewilderment, Noct continued.

Tarasque stopped skating in a spot several ml away in front of Airi and the Triad. It was watching the situation in the area quietly.

「Sir Zweigbergk. You should be protecting the defense base. Did something happen?」

The first team that was protecting the fortress fundamentally wouldn't leave from their position.

And yet, for this person to show up here, did something unexpected happen there?

Airi and the Triad all had such thought in their minds.

「Also, how did you find our location here?」

「Looks like there is no one else here. Are Lux Arcadia and the New Kingdom's raid squad, Syvalles in the middle of taking separate action?」

The old knight Zweigbergk didn't answer the question of Airi and co.

A faint sound of breathing could be heard from under the iron mask that concealed his expression.

「That's right but, why are you here?」

When Sharis asked once more, Zweigbergk drew out his Drag-Ride's Blade.

The medium sized double-edged thick Blade was a basic weapon that could fulfill both offensive and defensive role. Other than hacking down the opponent, it could also be used as a shield.

If a knight with abundant experience used it, there was no doubt that it would display extremely excellent utility.

「So the little sister has already finished the first trail, then there is worth in securing her.」

「.....? Just now, what did you say?」

When Sharis frowned and asked, Zweigbergk stabbed his Blade into the ground.

「—Then, I'll give you an answer. It seems you all are thinking that you managed to escape well from the enemy, but that is nothing more than an accidental luck. How am I able to find you all even without having a special equipment type Drag-Ride, it's the same way like how an animal tracks their prey.」

「.....」

The tone that came from under the helmet hadn't changed from before.

But, Noct sensed some king odd dangerous sign and she took hold of Airi's

waist.

「There is no sign of the Abyss, there is few buildings around that blocked the sight. A place with several escape paths available. And then trace of moving that deviates from the center to the edge, if there is that much information, then it's not difficult to grasp the movement of a squad.」

「Tillfur, are you ready for the teamwork? Noct, take care of Airi-chan.」

「Yes. Looks like we were also too careless.」

「Why am I giving an explanation kindly like this—that's because it will be troubling if that little sister dies. I have grasped that there is nobody in the area who will save you all. If you hand over Airi Arcadia obediently, then I promise I won't lay my hand on the other three.」

「—!？」

Airi and the others had faintly felt the sign of hostility, but they held their breath when Zweigbergk said it openly.

The White Ridge knight order that had acted as a member of the world alliance until now.

It was unthinkable that its vice captain, Singlen's right hand man would turn traitor in this way.

No, even from a long time ago Singlen had many times attempted to win over Lux with his schemes.

Rather it was Airi and the Triad who were too naive to let Zweigbergk this close to them.

Perhaps this was the result of being too focused on the trials before them and this situation where there were many other threats.

If this man moved by Singlen's orders, then it wouldn't be wrong to imagine that he would take away Airi as a hostage against Lux.

「Can I ask one question, Sir Zweigbergk?」

「.....I have no intention to have pointless dialogue but, in respect to your courage, I'll allow one question.」

Zweigbergk responded like that to Sharis's question.

The Triad didn't let their guard down even in the middle of such conversation.

「Why are you doing something like this? There should be no allowance for us to have a falling out between ourselves like this right now! Isn't the first priority to stop the world destruction by Sacred Eclipse?」

What Sharis spoke was the words in order to avoid fighting.

It was unknown whether it would work. Rather, the possibility was slim.

Therefore Tillfur and Noct at the rear stayed quiet nervously.

「In order to pressure the Lords, even making missy Airi to receive the trials. A civil official who originally shouldn't be standing in the battlefield is risking her life for the world's sake! I'm asking what do you think about it as a knight with honor!？」

Sharis who was the daughter of the vice commander of the New Kingdom's military attempted to appeal to the opponent's pride.

She did that while considering Zweigbergk as a veteran soldier with long military service, but—

「Hahahaha, kukukuku.....」

Airi and the Triad frowned seeing Zweigbergk laughing with shaking shoulders.

After laughing for a few seconds, he casually lifted up the medium sized Blade that was stabbed in the ground.

「No, my apologies. I had no intention of laughing but, it seems all of you had lived in a world that is too peaceful until now. Nostalgia was spontaneously welling up inside me.」

「Are you saying, that you have thrown away something like pride since a long time ago?」

In response Sharis was also sweating from her forehead while taking stance by holding her Blade in front of her.

From what she saw, there was no weapon like Cannon or Breath Gun among

Tarasque's armaments.

The possibility of getting hit by an attack should she escaped to the air should be reduced drastically, but if the enemy's target was Airi, she couldn't fight in a passive way.

(—No, rather than that can someone like me do this? Stopping a user of a Divine Drag-Ride, a powerful soldier on the level of being an aide of the Seven Dragon Paladins.....) She had confidence as a member of the raid squad Syvalles who had received training from her talented comrades.

In addition, thanks to Lisha's tuning that was specialized for the Triad, they were able to equip even better Drag-Knights, even so the opponent was powerful.

In the worst case, the best plan in this situation would be for her to take away Airi to escape to the sky, while leaving behind Tillfur and Noct to hold back the opponent.

But, putting aside Noct who could use the camouflage function of the special equipment type Drag-Ride, Tillfur who could only move on the ground with her land battle type would definitely get caught and killed.

She had made her resolve but, she couldn't pick that option.

Sharis was unable to abandon her important childhood friend who she had shared joys and sorrows together with since their childhood.

「Risking one's life for the world's sake.....is it? As I thought, all of you don't know anything. Whether it's the true shape of Avalon, or what will happen from here on, or why we are being made to fight.」

Zweigbergk spoke with a vaguely pitying tone. Sharis issued her instructions through Dragon Voice.

She judged that there was no ground for negotiation anymore.

She focused, and she awaited for the moment the enemy's speech paused—for the chance to take the initiative.

「But, it's happier to not know. There will only be suffering for people without power to know the reality. I will say it one more time, if you wish to be

unharmd then hand over that girl. I have no leeway to go easy.」

「That is our line Sir Zweigbergk. It will be a disgrace as the Blue Tyrant's right hand man to be defeated by inexperienced girls right?」

When Sharis provoked even while trembling, Zweigbergk snickered.

It seemed he interpreted it as a mere bluff, there was no problem with him underestimating them.

「I will consider it as all of you having resolved yourself. —Then, here I come!」

「Tillfur, Noct! Go!」

The instant the old soldier emitted his killing intent, Sharis raised her voice.

The two who had been told about the plan a few seconds ago exploded into action by running backward.

Tillfur carried Airi and moved to the left, Noct to the right, and Sharis flew to the sky.

「.....Hou」

The action that the Triad chose was to escape.

After saying provocations like that and giving a hint of fighting, they actually chose to escape without hesitation. Zweigbergk sighed in admiration seeing that.

「You all have made the best judgment. Just as expected from people who are present in this decisive battle. I even wish to make my subordinates learn from this. However—」

Even so the old soldier didn't look perturbed at all. He quickly grasped his Drag-Ride's control stick.

First he set his target to Tillfur's EX Wyrms that was skating away carrying Airi and he accelerated.

「From the start it has been the loss of you all by the time I had approached until this near!」

The wheels of Tarasque's armored legs rotated in high speed, and it dashed forward with a thunderous sound.

Even though EX Wurm's output was already inferior when compared to a Divine Drag-Ride, right now Tillfur was also carrying Airi.

Thus the distance was closed in the blink of an eye due to the difference in body balance.

The townscape of the Arcadia Empire was being projected at the surroundings, but the buildings didn't exist for real.

Zweigbergk was convinced that he would catch up in a few seconds. He quickly brandished his medium sized Blade.

「You can depart to the next world first. I will soon send your comrades to accompany you.」

Zweigbergk had approached until a few m behind Tillfur. She turned only her neck to look behind.

「My bad but, I still have the work of managing Lux-chi's request applications y'know. There is no way I'll die here.」

She leaped while cracking a joke and leaped over the rubble before her.

「—Fu」

But, Zweigbergk wasn't lured to leap after her. Without pause he slipped beside the obstacles and took the stance to stab his Blade above.

The instant the EX Wurm's leap reached the peak, Tillfur threw up Airi.

「So he won't get baited as expected.」

Airi who was murmuring with a nervous expression was caught by Sharis midair and she flew away.

If the one escaping changed direction, then the pursuer would reflexively want to leap in pursuit, but an opening would be created because it would be impossible to change direction midair.

If Zweigbergk leaped, the Triad would snipe him at that moment, but because he didn't, they took a different strategy for this situation.

「Handing over the target from above to below and then dispersing huh..... It's a good plan, but reckless in front of this me.」

「-.....!?!」

Right after that, Zweigbergk who grasped the situation suddenly put the brake on his armored legs' wheels and changed direction.

He took out a Dagger and held it aloof to throw towards the back of Sharis who was flying away.

At the same time his armor was enveloped in dark miasma.

「—Oops, I won't let you do that. Attacking a girl from the back like that!」

Tillfur who was on guard toward the activation of the Divine Raiment changed direction and charged towards Tarasque.

Because the Hammer that she had was a striking weapon, it could deal impact damage even against thick armor.

At that time when she swung her weapon with the momentum of her rush behind it, a girl's yell came from an empty space.

「No. Tillfur! His aim is you!」

「.....-!」

Just as pointed out by Noct who was hiding with her camouflage, Tarasque turned around as though he had been waiting and took a stance to intercept Tillfur.

Tillfur immediately leaped to the side, but mysterious sticky liquid was thrown from Tarasque's right arm.

「—Howling Roar!」

A bullet that looked like mud, created from Tarasque's armor. It was most likely a Special Armament.

In response Tillfur launched a vortex of shockwave to her front and dodged it.

Because it would be ill-advised to avoid thrown liquid only by leaping aside, she immediately defended using Howling Roar.

But, the darkish purple dirty mud stuck slightly on her armor.

The moment Tillfur's attention was caught by that, a single thrust from

Zweigbergk's Blade moved like an arrow and hit the EX Wurm.

「Uh.....ah.....!?!」

Zweigbergk's thrust was done with energy focused on the tip.

It easily broke through the EX Wurm's barrier and pierced the armor's shoulder.

「Tillfur!」

Sharis who was flying in the air yelled, and Noct who was hiding in the shadow of a building gasped.

「That was, Sir Singlen's Senjin! So you, his aide also learned it!?!」

Looking closer, there were countless windows of light floating around Zweigbergk unnoticed.

The hidden technique that Singlen used which applied the Drag-Ride's tuning as a battle technique—Senjin.

The attack of Senjin – Gouka, which focused the energy that was supplied to other parts into a single point on the weapon, granted it overwhelming destructive power.

In addition was Zweigbergk's refined sword handling as though he was smoothly moving his own limbs.

If he operated those two together, the current Triad wouldn't have any way to defend.

「I'm fine, I'm.....alive!」

But, Tillfur skated backward to escape the impact while responding to the voices of the two.

It was a complete coincidence, but because the enemy's sword tip grazed the handle of Tillfur's Hammer, she barely avoided a direct hit.

If not for that, then even the armor would be pierced and she would have died instantly.

But, Zweigbergk wasn't agitated at all by the unexpected happening and he gave chase.

The moment he brandished his Blade in order to deal the finishing blow, *Kinn!* such sound tore through the air.

「—!?」

Zweigbergk who was going to enter the preparation for Senjin once more put on the brakes suddenly.

Right after that, slashing lines following trajectory in the shape of a crescent moon crossed the space before his eyes over and over again. They chopped up the stone paving on the ground.

「Rare armament— long range weapon that sends energy flying from the edge of the Blade huh?」

Zweigbergk stopped his pursuit of Tillfur and looked above in admiration.

Over there was Sharis who was holding up a Blade that had just drawn a beautiful arc.

「Correct answer. My Blade can send out a slash. With this I can cut you up without getting closer.

The Shot Blade that Sharis was holding was the rare armament that was once used by a member of Dragon Marauder, Dilwy Froias.

After he was defeated by Lux and died, the Academy collected that rare armament.

At the dawn of the Triad's success in using the strengthened type general purpose Drag-Rides, they received new things from Lisha.

And then, through the training with Celis and the others, they finally learned how to use them.

Even when the Seven Dragon Paladins were captured and the Triad infiltrated the chapel to rescue them, they succeeded also because of this power.

「I see. But, it seems there is a reason why you are purposefully showing off that strength. Most likely the real attack will come from the EX Drake user who is hiding right now.」

「——」

Even while focusing on Sharis, he didn't neglect to be alert towards the other two at all.

But, there was no way they could stop even after their attack had been predicted.

No matter how veteran of a soldier he was, it should be impossible for him to deal with a weapon he had never seen before.

Therefore, even the opponent's words that sounded like he knew about their plan might be just to make them hesitate.

Noct who was hiding with camouflage finished considering until that far in an instant.

In the first place, Airi had no intention to withdraw while leaving one of them behind to hold back the enemy.

They didn't have as much talent and strength as Lisha and the others, but they had decided to do everything they could here to the death.

(We have no intention of running away. We have come until this far after all.)

Noct was weighing the timing to attack. A past event was resurrected at the back of her mind.

It was the memory of her childhood, when she was first brought to meet the girl who would become her master.

Sharis

Part 5

「It's an honor to meet you Sharis-sama. I am the second daughter of the Leaflet house, Noct. I will be serving you formally five years later, but please don't hesitate to tell me to do any work as you wish.」

The house of Leaflet, the family of servants that had been serving under high class nobles for generations.

Noct received education for that since she was very young. She showed her face in the residence of the house of Baltshift for the first time when she turned five years old.

Noct's personality was calm and obedient by nature. She quickly accepted her duty as a maid and answered the expectations of her parents who were educating her passionately.

Because of that she had an atmosphere that made her seem like a competent enough maid since her childhood.

On the other hand, Sharis was a blue haired girl who was two years older.

The girl who brought about a dignified aura that was somewhat like a young boy looked at Noct with a troubled smile.

「You are amazing, your manner is far better than me.」

「I'm really honored to hear that. That means I haven't acted rudely towards Ojou-sama.」

「.....」

Sharis let out a deep sigh seeing Noct who replied with a serious look.

Noct didn't notice that the girl was exasperated towards her who was acting mature and respectful.

「You are going to listen to whatever I say right?」

「If it's anything that I can do.」

「Then, don't call me Ojou-sama, call me Sharis. Even though this house is already strict everyday, if even a girl younger than me is acting that courteously to me, I won't be able to breathe here.」

Sharis said that with a bright smile.

After that, Noct's hand was pulled by her and she was led to Tillfur who came to play.

And then, they exchanged promises that when it was just the three of them, they would act as friends without reservation to each other.

The three had different personalities and standings from each other, but they mysteriously got along well with each other, and their friendship continued from their childhood until now.

With Noct's personality, she would obediently devote herself to her master no matter what kind of person they were, but in that case she surely wouldn't grow to feel like this.

Perhaps, her first friend was these two girls.

Part 6

(Properly speaking, I have to risk my life to let my master Sharis to escape no matter what. Even if my master refuses it, it's only natural to push her away from this place.)

And then now, Noct was holding her breath while recalling their discussion before participating in this decisive battle.

『We don't know what will happen from now, but if there is an unavoidable danger coming, won't you two make a promise with me that us three will die together?』

The discussion of only the three of them that they didn't even tell to Airi.

That promise was Sharis's consideration towards Noct.

When the situation turned into one where they had exhausted every available means and they were forced to use someone as a decoy, surely Noct would choose the path of becoming a sacrifice to let Sharis get away.

But, the girl who was their leader said that she didn't want that.

She was aware that it was a mistaken conduct as a knight who was standing on the battleground.

For the sake of one's objective, sometimes they had to push through and advance with heartlessness like sacrificing even their comrades.

That was the way of the military officer occupation. As the daughter of a vice commander, she should know that very well.

『The three of us have trained our teamwork all this time. Whether it's fighting or escaping, the probability of success will rise only when there are the three of us. That's why, even if we have to let Airi-chan get away alone, we three should always be together.』

Tillfur smiled wryly and Noct was exasperated in response to those words of Sharis that were filled with conviction.

『Haa..... Geez Sharis, you really are only good at making excuses aren't you..... How are you going to become a commander candidate in the future like that?』

Tillfur shrugged her shoulders while going ^{yare} 'good ^{yare} grief'. Even so her face didn't look that dissatisfied.

Noct who was similarly surmising Sharis's intention silently looked down and smiled.

Not even one of them wished to do anything like abandoning the other.

It would be another matter if it was something accidental, but they didn't want to make that choice by themselves.

If Sharis was actually polishing the teamwork of the three of them with such intention until now, then there would be no act of mixing up official business with personal affairs that was more absurd than this.

She hadn't changed since Noct first met her.

She was like an awe-inspiring big sister who possessed leadership, but she had a playful heart even with her seriousness. She was a girl that was easy to like.

But, because such person was treating a mere servant like her as a friend, Noct was able to obtain experience that was hard to come by.

『Yes. I understand.』

It wasn't for fulfilling a order, but it was a wish to respond to the other's feelings.

Because, although Noct didn't really have a wish of her own, she was able to fight for the sake of the friend she loved.

(As a servant from the house of Leaflet, as a member of Syvalles, what's more in order to save my friend's life, I will risk my life. Then—)

She had no fear even if the opponent was far above them.

Towards Zweigbergk who threatened with words to make them hesitate, she unleashed the rare armament that she kept as an ace up her sleeve.

「—Circular Edge!」

「.....-!?!」

Noct who was hiding diagonally behind Zweigbergk dispelled her EX Drake's camouflage, and in a flash she deployed her throwing weapon.

The rare armament that was possessed by Heiburg's top brass called Gerdaf in the past.

The new kingdom military collected it, and it was transferred to Noct through Lisha. She had finally become skilled enough to use it well.

The eight blades combined with EX Drake's radar locked on the enemy. They drew an arc through the air and assaulted Tarasque.

The rotating circular blades were shining dazzlingly due to the energy enveloping them.

The blades by themselves had no strength for a sure kill, but it should be terrifyingly difficult to dodge them all.

「Nuu.....!」

Battle Array – Vicissitudes

A parry by instantaneous deployment of barrier—Senjin – Ruten. There was a high possibility that Zweigbergk had learned it, but it should be impossible to use that to deal against simultaneous attacks from many directions.

Just as Noct expected, Zweigbergk swung his Blade and deflected half of the circular blades.

「So it's working.」

The remaining four Circular Edges stuck on Tarasque's armor and they shaved the surface with grinding sounds.

Once Circular Edge impacted the target, they had the trait of sticking to the surface and continued to attack without pause.

If the armor was thin then it would be severed right away, and even if the armor boasted solid defensive power, it could serve the role of dulling the

enemy’s motion using the continuous impact from the blade’s rotation.

「Now you can’t move! Then taste my sword one more time!」

From the air, Sharis unleashed a rain of slashes using her Shot Blade along with a speech that was like an advance notice.

Shockwave slashes that rained down right and left.

The moment Zweigbergk blocked them by using his barrier like an umbrella, a loud sound of moving motor rang out from the side.

「What.....?」

The old soldier looked behind with a dubious face, but Tillfur’s EX Wyrms were far away.

But, that distance that even reached more than a hundred m was turned into nothing in the next moment.

Dragon Kicking Run
「Here I go! Catapult Arts-.....!」

—*GOO-!*

An explosive sound that pierced the eardrum.

With a momentum that felt like it would even overtake the sound it produced, Tillfur accelerated from a long distance.

The EX Wyrms pierced the air and charged forward like a bullet. Without stopping it struck with a horizontal sweep of the Hammer.

「—Guh, OOOOGOH.....!」

BAGIIII! Tarasque’s thick armor was smashed apart at the same time when it hit.

Receiving the full power blow that was unleashed from EX Wyrms’ super acceleration, the heavyweight class Tarasque was sent flying to far away behind.

Without stopping he slipped through the projection of the imperial capital’s

scenery and vanished from the sight of the three.

「Haa! Haa.....! Haaaa.....!」

The stone paving that Tillfur had passed had the wheel track from the EX Wyrms' super acceleration engraved on it.

This was one of the sure kill combination attacks by the Triad, a technique that was effective even against top class members of Syvalles like Lisha and the others.

「Hooray.....! We did it! The attack landed!」

A few seconds later, Tillfur swung up her Hammer with many feelings flooding her.

This was the moment all the effort they accumulated bore fruit.

First the other two would attract the enemy's attention, then Noct who was in hiding would stop the enemy in their tracks using Circular Edge.

On top of that Sharis who was above would rain down slashes using Shot Blade to seal the enemy's hand by making them deploy a barrier.

When the enemy's mobility and ability to react were taken away, Tillfur who had taken enough distance would accelerate suddenly from a far distance and hit with her Hammer's powerful blow.

The Catapult Arts that Tillfur received from Lisha was an internal type rare armament. It realized super acceleration with a takeoff run.

The attack's power would be explosively increased in comparison with the takeoff distance, but the burden to the user and the degree of difficulty in using it would also increase accordingly.

Personally rushing ahead with super high speed while inflicting an attack in such state was extremely difficult. It wouldn't possibly succeed without having faith that the other two were holding the enemy in place.

Therefore, this one attack was concealing a destructive power that could only be accomplished by the Triad.

As long as the first attack from Noct using Circular Edge could land, it would

be difficult to dodge this cooperation attack.

Therefore, for an opponent who only saw it for the first time without knowing anything about it beforehand, it should display a tremendous effect but—

「Calm down Tillfur! Don't let your guard down!」

Sharis was relieved that their teamwork succeeded from start to finish and her lips slackened, but she immediately came to herself and chided herself and the others instead.

「Come to think of it, missy Yoruka taught us about the concept of being prepared for a counterstroke.」

This place was the deep floor level of Avalon.

It was a dangerous area where it wouldn't be strange no matter what happened.

Although the threat before their eyes had been removed, they must not let their guard down till the very end.

「Is Airi-chan who is away from us safe!? Noct」

「Yes. There is no reaction of the Abyss or other living things around Airi.」

Noct immediately replied while collecting the scattered Circular Edges.

The three gathered close to each other, then they followed the direction where Zweigbergk was blown away to.

(Don't be rash..... The attack definitely hit successfully but, we still don't know whether he has been defeated or not.)

Sharis took a deep breath and filled her whole body with tension once more.

The opponent was a user of a Divine Drag-Ride and also a powerful warrior. His armor was also the tough defense of a land battle type.

They managed to take him by surprise well, but it was too hasty to write him off as defeated here.

「Noct, there is still no reaction of the enemy's Drag-Ride getting dispelled right? Let's strip off his armor after this and restrain him.」

「Yes. Understood.」

At the same time when Noct answered, they gradually caught up to Zweigbergk's figure.

But, when they had advanced for 300 m ahead, they turned speechless.

Far from dying or fainting, Zweigbergk was standing still wearing his Tarasque.

「—!? No way-!」

「How!? It's impossible!」

Tillfur and Noct couldn't hide their shaken feelings and opened their mouth.

In front of a rubble where the projection of a house had vanished, Zweigbergk was taking his stance with composure.

His thick armor was half-destroyed, but he himself was mostly unharmed.

But, the iron helmet that was snugly covering his face was slightly broken on the eye's area. A sharp eye glint that was like a vulture could be peeked.

「Don't tell me, Break Purge!? The moment Tillfur's Hammer landed, you broke your own armor and dispersed the impact—」

「That's a keen insight, Drag-Knight of Syvalles. That was splendid teamwork. It's regrettable. Such strength in that young age, if you all continue to train, then the future as powerful people will be opened for you.」

When Zweigbergk showed a smile that was mixed with resignation, Sharis and the others put themselves on guard.

「I accept your praise gratefully, but your worry is unnecessary.....」

Their sure kill co-op attack came to naught, even so the damage shouldn't be light.

The thick armor of Tarasque was also half-destroyed, it had no more overwhelming defensive power.

Then even Sharis's Shot Blade and Noct's Circular Edge could deal a lethal injury.

Then—

Taking advantage of that slight opening when Sharis switched her thought, Tarasque showed its back towards them and took off.

「Planning to run!? —No! You want to take Airi-chan away!?!」

In the first place the enemy's objective was securing Airi.

She could become a hostage against Lux, and she could also become a trump card to obtain Avalon.

She was hiding in the nearby building so she wouldn't get found out, but it would be the end in the slightest chance she was kidnapped.

『We are going with teamwork B! Tillfur, Noct. You two ready!?!』

『.....Roger-』

『Yes. We have finished preparing.』

They communicated with Dragon Voice even in this close range so that the enemy wouldn't realize their tactic.

Right now it was like the opposite of the start, they would begin a co-op attack that started from Tillfur charging forward to chase the enemy. But at that instant, an impossible occurrence happened.

「—Wha-!?!」

When Tillfur caught up to Tarasque and she brandished her Hammer, the surrounding exploded right after that.

—*DOGUN-!*

A flame blast that covered the area swallowed Tillfur's EX Wurm. Right after that her armor was broken.

「Tillfur!What is this.....! What happened!?!」

Sharis immediately raised her voice and flew forward in order to rescue her childhood friend.

「Noct, look for the enemy's position using radar! I'll go to protect Tillfur—.....-!?!」

The face of Sharis who was quickly giving instruction turned pale.

Sticky air was coiling around the EX Wyvern's armor.

No, not just the air, even the ground was heavily smeared with sticky substance.

The trap Tillfur fell into.

She was late in noticing the thing that Tarasque laid out when escaping.

「Sharis! That substance is also obstructing the radar! Don't get near—.....」

The eyes of Sharis who was turning around toward the voice caught the sight of Zweigbergk who should have disappeared suddenly, striking his medium sized Blade toward Noct.

「—Truly, unfortunate.」

「Uh, AAAAA.....-!」

The strike wasn't a sweeping slash, but a vertical slash as though to bisect the target. The EX Drake's armor was smashed apart after receiving it from behind.

The shoulder where Circular Edge was installed was slashed through. In a single strike, Noct's fighting ability was taken away.

At the same time, the smokescreen coiling around Sharis's armor exploded.

「U, a.....!」

Sharis who kept flying even after receiving the flame blast and shockwave barely avoided a direct attack.

But, blood quickly left Sharis's face when she saw Tillfur and Noct who collapsed with their armor already dispelled.

She understood that just now, their chance of victory had been completely crushed.

「What, happened.....!? What did you scatter while escaping!?!」

「To express my respect to you three, I will tell you. The Divine Raiment of my
Reverse Scorching Heat
Tarasque is Back Fire, an ability to spread out combustible smokescreen while moving, and explode it to seal every kind of pursuing attack from the enemy.

「So it's, something like that.....!」

It also obstructed EX Drake's radar, it even sealed the movement to pursue while allowing to counterattack at the same time. So to speak it was a Divine Raiment of counterattack type.

It seemed the power of the explosion was unexpectedly low, but Sharis and the others who didn't know about that Divine Raiment were completely outsmarted.

「Deserting under enemy attack is a disgrace, but a retreat with purpose isn't. You too can exert yourself to death for the sake of protecting Airi Arcadia. That is your last duty.」

「.....」

Even without him telling her that, Sharis also understood it.

Now that it had become impossible to form teamwork with the three of them, there was no chance of victory for them in challenging Zweigbergk here.

It wasn't just the difference in performance between their Drag-Rides, their skill as Drag-Knights also had a wide difference.

If she used the fact that the enemy couldn't fly in the sky against him, and focused completely in evasion and escaping, then there was still a way.

However, Tillfur and Noct would be left behind like that and they would definitely be finished off.

After all there was no reason to leave them alive.

「What are you hesitating for? After polishing your skill as a Drag-Knight until that far, but you are unable to even resolve yourself to die for your duty?」

Zweigbergk brandished his Blade as though to follow her bad imagination.

The moment Sharis saw that, she exploded into action and flew.

「—STOOoOOOPP!」

「You picked a foolish option. Was I wrong in my evaluation of you?」

Vun-! With strange sound, countless light frames floated around Tarasque.

「—Senjin – Ruten」

The moment Sharis's Blade was going to hit, a barrier's force field was quickly deployed in front of Tarasque, parrying Sharis's Blade.

When she staggered from having her momentum diverted, the enemy's Blade sharply struck her shoulder.

The Force Core of the EX Wyvern was impacted, and the armor was immediately dispelled.

「Kuh, a.....!」

Sharis collapsed on the street of the imperial capital. Zweigbergk looked down on her with a cool gaze.

「Was it just children's make-believe game in the end? The two who followed a half-baked person like you are also incompetent.」

「.....Shut up! What do you know!? No matter how strong he is, he is just a human who calmly deceived other people for the sake of his own benefit! A man who is serving that kind of foolish coward! Don't you speak as though you are a proper knight!」

That was an objection that came out from Sharis's conviction.

Her inability to prioritize the objective in response to the state of the battle.

She was aware of the naivety and immaturity of her inability to abandon her comrades.

But, she couldn't forgive humiliation towards her two childhood friends who sympathized with the feelings of such Sharis.

Those words that she spat out from such emotion caused Zweigbergk's eyes to snap wide open.

「A childish little girl like you, dare to insult my lord?」

「—!?」

Sharis's expression paled from receiving that poisonous killing intent.

Though imperfect, she was participating in battle as a member of Syvalles, she intended to hold a resolve that befitted this situation.

—*Bakii!*

「Gu—!AAaAAH.....!」

Tarasque's armored leg carelessly stepped on Sharis's right arm.

Just with that, her arm easily snapped.

Sharis screamed from the intense pain and she became unable to make any movement.

Even the thought of aiming for a surprise attack using her Sword Device had vanished from her mind.

Tillfur and Noct who saw that moved their hand to pull their Sword Devices, but their right arms were also kicked that they broke.

「It-, HURTTSSS.....!」

「—.....-!」

Tears spilled out from Tillfur's eyes, and Noct's usual expressionless face also distorted in anguish.

They thought they weren't killed with one attack was to smoke out Airi who was in hiding, but it seemed they were mistaken.

「Incompetents like you bastards who are only fixated on righteousness are the second most irritating thing for me in this world. You are all drunk with your sense of justice and heroic acts, and increase the needless sacrifices for the sake of fulfilling your own satisfaction. If that's all then I'll simply regard it as children's joke, but insulting my lord was a poor move.」

This enraged man was going to make the three of them suffer as much as possible before killing them.

In front of the overwhelming killing intent that came from the strong, the three were shaking.

Even if they met torture to death, there was already no way to avoid it, but at this rate it would be bad if they continued to scream.

Especially if Noct continued to receive violence, Airi who was in hiding might give herself up.

Sharis who thought that tightly grasped the handle of her Sword Device with

her remaining left arm.

(Perhaps.....I was really unable to make my resolve. Just as this man said, I might be just a spoiled little girl. But, even so—)

Tillfur and Noct. When she turned her gaze towards her two childhood friends, there was light residing in each of their eyes that were dyed in despair.

To raise the chance of Airi to survive, there was no other way but to end their own lives.

They had to do it while it was still possible for them.

「Both of you, sorry. I am a useless leader.....」

A scratchy voice leaked out from Sharis's lips.

Then, her two best friends who were gasping in intense pain looked like they were smiling only for a moment.

「—Please stop! If you are looking for me then I'm here! I will cooperate with you, that's why!」

The instant the Triad resolved themselves to commit suicide, from a slight distance away—from the shadow of rubble that were covered with the projection of a building, Airi raised her voice.

「I see, that's a beautiful self-sacrifice mentality but, you are too late. I'll kill these three. After that I'll have you act as a hostage.」

「.....You, bastard」

Sharis was convinced seeing Zweigbergk's cold eye glint.

He planned to kill the three of them here and trample even Airi's resolve in handing over herself.

It was a predicament of absolute despair. —At that time, a footstep suddenly resounded at that main street.

Behind Zweigbergk, a small silhouette was standing without even giving off a presence.

Episode 4 – The Inevitable Outsider Element

Part 1

Lux who was rescued from Mishis's assault by Syvalles's members was continuing the investigation of the deep level floor along with Singlen.

Their first objective was to find Listelka and hold her back, but it appeared that the enemy was also being really careful, because currently they couldn't even find any trace of her.

While doing that, they arrived at a tower with impressive ornaments on it.

Inside, where stone statues that were modeled after angels were lined up, an Automata was standing.

A tight outfit that looked like a pilot suit was clinging to her body. Horns were growing out from her head.

There was no doubt that this was a clone of the Gear Leader Arshalia just like before.

「I have been waiting, you who possess a qualification. The second trial will put a far bigger burden on you than before. If you are finished with your preparations, please touch me.」

She told him that with a tone that was the same as the Arshalia from before.

The second trial in order to reach the center of Avalon.

If this process was finished, it seemed that the main body of Arshalia would appear, but.....

「Will we be able to reach the center earlier than Listelka? Would it be better for

us to search for her instead without doing the trial here?」

Lux advised like that, but Singlen scoffed.

「I see, then you better take me to where they are quickly. I'll hold them back without fail then.」

「.....」

「Right now Fugil is guarding Listelka by himself. In that case they must be on their guard against a wide range by use of radar. They should be avoiding battle as much as possible until Mishis returns. As for the reason, you have experienced it yourself haven't you?」

「.....Because she will be completely defenseless while receiving this 『trial』?」

Singlen responded with a fearless grin at Lux's question.

It seemed he answered correctly.

No matter how powerful Fugil was, it would be difficult for him to cover for his master, who would only be able to stand still, against multiple enemies.

Thus, Singlen predicted that they would thoroughly avoid encounters with Lux and the others until the time they finished the three trials.

「Besides, if you finished the second trial, they also won't be able to leave you alone anymore. Rather than getting overtaken after coming this far, they will surely come to finish you off mercilessly instead.」

「—Understood. Then, please take care of me.」

Lux resolved himself and dispelled his Drag-Ride. He then headed towards Arshalia.

He took a deep breath, and reached out his hand towards her.

「Then, you will enter the second trial now. I will begin to strengthen you with Baptism. During that time, you will face the wound of your heart that is engraved in your memory.」

But, the next sentence Arshalia spoke caused Lux to gasp.

「Baptism? Just now, what did—」

The moment Lux asked back spontaneously, Arshalia's fingertip shined in seven colors.

「Guh, AAAAAH!?!」

Elixir was poured in from her palm. At the same time a strange thought was flowing into him.

His mind was invaded at the same time with the intense pain. The surrounding's scenery was dissolving faintly.

「.....Now, trace your footsteps along with your memory. I'll watch over you writhing in agony.」

Seen off by Singlen's haughty grin, Lux's consciousness instantly flew away.

And then he saw a strange scene once more.

Part 2

The day of the Revolution, five years ago—

The last decisive battle that happened in the Arcadia Empire's imperial capital.

Lux who defeated a great number of Drag-Knights and finally rushed into the castle was confronting his father, the Emperor, in front of the throne.

First, Lux felt an intense out of place feeling seeing the beginning of the memory.

If he remembered correctly, when Lux headed to the throne room, the Emperor should already be dead, sinking into the sea of blood along with his close associates and imperial guards.

There, Fugil sneered at Lux who had wounds all over his body, and rebuked him that he was the weakest.

But, here in this memory, the Emperor, his close associates, and the imperial guard were all unharmed.

Even though they were giving off intense animosity, both sides had no visible wounds on them.

Even Lux himself who was wearing Bahamut didn't have a single scratch on him.

(Am I seeing a dream? Because I wished that reality would be like this, I'm wishing to redo it once more?)

Lux smiled bitterly at himself, thinking that it was really not manly even if he said so himself.

Beside such thought, the scene in front of him was progressing on its own accord.

「You fool. Do you think that your revolution will come true? I will praise you for growing skilled as a Drag-Knight, but you erred in how to use it. To bare your fangs against my empire like this.」

「.....Please surrender Chichi-ue. And then, please receive the judgment from Count Atismata and the people. I will accompany you as your son.」

Lux responded to the Emperor's scornful gaze with an aloof serious face.

He had already resolved himself.

If there was an obstacle to the Revolution, he was resolved to smash it no matter what he had to do.

「Hahahaha. Looks like you haven't noticed anything. You are inferior. You have some talent as a Drag-Knight, but after all, you are just the failure youngest son among the imperial family.」

「.....What?」

「How do you think my Arcadia Empire came to obtain this much prosperity? Why couldn't our rule be overturned? The cause of your defeat is your misreading of that power!」

When the Emperor snapped his finger with a scornful laugh, a single Drag-Knight showed up from behind a pillar.

Lux had decided that he wouldn't be shaken no matter what happened, but his face lost color instantly.

Over there was Airi who should be staying in home because of sickness.

His little sister who was unconscious while her body was restrained by an armored arm.

「Airi-!?!」

「—Don't move. If you move even for a little, then my failure of a daughter—your little sister will lose her life.」

Just as the Emperor said, the imperial guard Drag-Knight was putting his Blade on Airi's neck.

Just from that, the Lux inside his dream became unable to move as though his

limbs were chained.

(.....Why? How!?)

Lux in reality was even more bewildered at that sight.

He hadn't met Airi since two days before the day of the Revolution and he should have entrusted her to a maid to take care of her.

If it wasn't known that Lux was the mastermind behind the revolution, then it should be impossible to kidnap Airi beforehand.

Lux had also continued to be careful since the resistance had started a month ago. He shouldn't be suspected at all, and yet...

「Besides, good news has also arrived. Atismata who was rebelling against me has been killed just now. He fought bravely, but that X X was bad. A seam appeared from there, and at the end it led towards you.」

What was this?

Even though he should be inside a dream, he could only understand a part of it.

This wasn't a convenient dream that Lux wished for. Was this a nightmare?

But in any case, in this world the battle's outcome had been decided while Lux was unaware.

The imperial guard Drag-Knights who were gathered here weren't a big deal, but it was over if Airi was taken hostage.

Even if he sacrificed his little sister and saved the country, there would be nothing remaining for Lux after that.

Should he sacrifice himself and Airi for the sake of Philuffy who would remain behind?

—No, Lux was unable to do anything like letting Airi die here without doing anything.

「Dispel your armor and surrender. Or else I'll sever the head of your little sister right here, right now! Kneel, you stupid son!」

The raging words of the Emperor flew. Lux's hand reached out towards the

Sword Device of Bahamut.

At that instant, a voice descended on the audience hall.

「Ku-ku-ku. What an incomprehensible thing. For Count Atismata's X X to accidentally be linked to a man that is the Empire's close aide— perhaps this is your wicked luck as the Emperor.」

「—You!」

「Fugil, niisan.....!?!」

Fugil who was similarly wearing Bahamut like Lux was looking down on all of them from near the tall ceiling.

Perhaps he had activated Reload on Fire, because Fugil was flying forward with a speed that the eye couldn't follow. He cut down the imperial guard Drag-Knight who was taking Airi hostage without any sound.

「—Wha-!?!」

Agitation ran through the chief vassals at the surroundings who saw that.

Several imperial guards immediately readied their Blades and rushed towards Fugil, but the table was turned on them instantly.

「Im, possible.....!」

The Emperor's voice trembled and his face convulsed with terror. He yelled after seeing what happened.

「—Why!? Why are you baring your fangs towards us!? You, who saved our ancestor and was called as the hero of our bloodline!」

「.....!?!」

A strong thought of doubt was born inside the consciousness of Lux who heard that.

「Fugil saved the ancestor of the Arcadia Empire? Wasn't Fugil the eldest son of the emperor?」

No, in the first place what did it mean that Fugil had saved the ancestor of the Old Empire?

「Hou. How do you know about that? I don't remember ever speaking about that to you though.」

「I perused the old documents of the past. In the record that is only told to Arcadia's imperial family, your name and existence were written there. We, who were once called as the family of traitors and received persecution for many years, Fugil, it was you who led us to the victory of the revolution—」

(—!? What does that mean!?)

Even more strange chills ran through Lux when he heard the Emperor's words.

(In the first place, in the past of this situation, Fugil saved our ancestor, the family of traitors?)

Then, the one who destroyed the Holy Arcadia Empire was also—

Lux was watching that scene as an existence that was only his consciousness. Naturally he couldn't speak any words here.

On the other hand, Fugil didn't make a single twitch on his expression. He replied with a derisive smile.

「As I thought, in everything there will always be unforeseen incidents accompanying. Making use of that X X and killing Count Atismata caused me to misread the distortion of fate. Now I have to make a bit of a correction—come out, my transformation Drag-Ride, Ouroboros.」

Fugil lifted his Sword Device high. At the same time, an intense quake ran through the inside of the castle.

「Kuh.....!」

Lux in the scene didn't understand what was going on, but for the time being he had to carry Airi to a safe place.

Lux held Airi in his hands, flew outside the castle, and searched for a safe place.

The moment the Lux inside the dream flew out of the audience hall.

He saw the surviving Drag-Ride force that were gathering near the castle

assaulting Fugil all at once.

「Kill that guy! Don't let him get away from this castle alive-!」

The angry yell of the Emperor that resounded in the dark night.

But, Lux certainly saw it.

The impressive castle of the Arcadia Empire that boasted long years of glory.

The silhouette of a Divine Drag-Ride that he had never seen before, it possessed a gigantic frame that surpassed such castle.

The remaining few hundred Drag-Knights who gathered in the area started an all-out bombardment.

Like that even the castle was swallowed by the flames of war and it was gone from sight.

Part 3

「—Uh, GUAaaAAAAH!」

Lux woke up from receiving a pain as though his chest was stabbed open.

Deep level floor—the Automata who held the role as guide, Arshalia's clone was watching over him in front of him. In addition Singlen was standing beside her.

He should be at Lux's side because he was tentatively a guard, but it looked as though he wasn't protecting Lux at all.

「What a noisy man. Just when I thought that you were sleeping so carelessly until now, this time you are screaming so loudly.」

「.....」

What a man.

Far from worrying about Lux who was in pain from receiving Baptism, the first thing that came out of his mouth was sarcasm.

He wished to grumble at such attitude, but it would be pointless to have an argument with this man, so he refrained.

In exchange, Arshalia's clone gave him words of encouragement.

「Thank you for your hard work. The Baptism on you has been safely completed. With this, the preparation to obtain the right of management of the center is finished. After all, to make use of Avalon's functions, it will be a burden that no ordinary person can endure.」

「Preparation? Just now, it was that preparation?」

His flesh and mind were strengthened with Baptism, creating a state that could handle the center.

That meant, everyone else would also receive this in the second trial.

Putting aside Aeryl who had resistance in receiving Baptism from the beginning, he was worried about Airi.

She wasn't sickly anymore like in the past, but he wondered if she would be able to endure this pain.

「U, gu.....! Haa, haa.....」

He put off worrying about other people for later.

Right now Lux was extremely weak. Far from wearing a Drag-Ride, he couldn't even stand up properly.

「It's better for a weakling to not move for a while you know? The Baptism here tampers with a lot of nerves in the whole body. Most likely the other candidates are also in the same condition.」

「.....How do you know that!?!」

Lux reacted with alarm to the end of Singlen's sentence that he spoke out really naturally.

Even Aeryl who was a Lord didn't know about the process of this trial.

「You are really a selfish man huh. I have told you repeatedly that if you want to know then submit under me. Are you fit to become a chore boy with that kind of bad memory?」

「Don't divert the discussion! We are participating in this battle as a part of the world alliance, who is under who isn't related! Not telling the others about information regarding the capture of Avalon is a violation of the pact!」

「Kukuku, and then you are also foolish like usual huh.」

Lux brought his face closer with wheezing breath, but the Blue Tyrant kept acting curtly.

「At present, there is no existence in history that has ever reached this Avalon. No.....perhaps I should say that it was arranged for the world to perceive it like that. If that's the case, my words are just a lie you know? How can you prove that what I'm saying is correct?」

「——」

It was just as he said.

There was no way Singlen could know about this matter.

It should be nothing more than his usual nonsense, or he was talking about his deduction while making it seem like he knew what was going on.

And yet, why did he think that his words were the truth?

「How about I kindly teach you? That's because you know it. At the bottom of your heart, you understand that my words are the truth.」

「.....Such, thing」

「I was trying to make you obey me because of that. You are someone who tilts the balance, someone chosen in the singular point of destiny and remains there. In the upheaval of history, the transition of ruling systems, there will always be a central person in it. The caliber of that person replaces the distortion and tendency of the era, pushing through everything. Therefore—」

The moment Singlen continued his words, screams came from the surroundings.

When Lux peeked out from the window of the tower, he could see the figures of the populace running around at the surrounding.

「This is, an illusion? No, is this a scene that happened in the Arcadia Empire?」

「Indeed.」

Arshalia's clone immediately answered Lux's question.

「In the period of maturity of the Arcadia Empire, a secret medicine called Elixir was created, and then a surgery to adapt it to the body—the technology of Baptism was established. If the usage and dose was mistaken, it would result in death or serious after-effects. But if it succeeds, then the subject will obtain abilities that far surpasses ordinary people.」

Come to think of it, Aeryl also talked about such thing.

Elixir was granted only to royalty and the nobility, producing superior people from birth—the bloodline of ruler.

「An extremely limited number of people, and then the great number of lower

class people who propped them up. Even among the Arcadia Empire that ruled the world, the social standing was divided into two. And then—」

『.....Uh, GYAAAAAH!?!』

『Stop, STOP ITTTTT.....-!?!』

The scream that came from the reproduced scene caused Lux to react and lean forward.

Looking closer, several Abyss attacked people who were carrying weapons and devoured them.

「This scene is also a projection of a past recording, not a real thing? Then, don't tell me, the Abyss—」

「It's like that. The imperial family created the Abyss as a method to oppose rebels, criminals, and external enemies. Furthermore they also created the Ragnarok as guards to protect the Ruins.」

「.....」

Splat splat That gruesome scene where the populace were eaten caused Lux to avert his gaze reflexively.

And then, the Abyss were flying away to somewhere.

「.....-?The Abyss are heading somewhere else? Are they returning to the Ruins?」

When the playback was over, Lux thought that the projection was cut off, but unexpectedly there was still a continuation.

When he immediately looked towards Arshalia, she responded with a nod.

「They are going back. To the Abyss creation plant inside this Avalon. They spring forth from Ruins, then return back to the inside. That's the mechanism.」

The projection of the Automata answered so. Lux obtained conviction from that.

The Abyss would return after accomplishing their objective—that was all they did.

But, something bothered Lux inside.

「Don't you think it's strange? Certainly the Abyss are necessary from the point of view of protecting the Ruins. But, this place is the Arcadia Empire's capital. No matter how completely the Abyss are under control, where is the need of using them instead of Drag-Knights?」

It was just as Singlen said.

Most likely the management of the Drag-Rides was mostly done by royalty and the nobility too with few exceptions.

In other words, even though they could use Drag-Rides to carry out the purge, why were they deliberately using the Abyss?

Was it for making a brutal example, or to save time and labor, or else—

The projection was progressing even while Lux wasn't moving.

To the underground graveyard that existed behind the imperial castle—the catacombs.

「The record projection is still not over? How much longer will it continue?」

「The playback of record projection is over for the moment. This place is the imperial capital's catacombs. The place that projected that scenery will become the place of the last trial.」

「.....Sir Singlen. My physical condition has recovered. Let's head there next.」

「Kukuku, what, chore boy. Are you trying to chase after Arcadia Empire's history while abandoning our mission?」

「There is no time to talk nonsense with you. No, if Arshalia's main body is at the last trial, Listelka should also definitely go there.」

If they could enter into the central from there, it would become an ambush if they waited for Fugil there.

「Well, I'll consider that as correct. Let's go chore boy.」

Singlen drove Leviathan and glided towards the back of the imperial castle.

Lux also took a deep breath and after he calmed down his feelings, he wore Wyvern in order to preserve his stamina and followed behind.

The effect on his body due to Baptism wasn't much.

On the contrary, the Drag-Ride he was clad with felt like it was adapting to his body more than before.

Lux was thinking while chasing after Singlen's back.

In the end, was Lisha and the others who were facing Mishis safe?

How far had Aeryl progressed with the trials?

And then—Airi and the Triad.

「.....-!」

Lux suppressed his wavering emotion with his will and flew.

At the same time, he was feeling a mysterious uneasiness in his chest because of the scene of five years ago that was projected as an illusion.

Part 4

A few minutes before Lux received the Baptism that was the second trial.

The deadly battle between Lisha and the others who were confronting Mishis in the central arena was continuing.

The Key's Supervisor Mishis was a powerful warrior who owned the nickname of Anti Drag-Knight.

Due to Azi Dahaka's Divine Raiment Avesta, there was a risk of immediate annihilation if each of their abilities and energy were stolen.

Thus, Lisha as well as Krulcifer whose main methods of attack were long range accomplished the role of vanguard.

In response Mishis didn't move at the slightest with her halberd at the ready. She was silently watching the surroundings.

Not even a shred of uneasiness or carelessness could be seen from her while confronting five Divine Drag-Ride users.

The scenery of the Arcadia Empire that was projected in the abandoned capital.

The moment real angel type Abyss flew in its sky, Lisha unsheathed her Sword Device.

「Eat this-! Legion!」

Tiamat's special armament, the ten projectile weapons in the shape of arrowheads attacked Mishis with roaring sound.

At the same time Krulcifer glided along with Fafnir and fired her Freezing Cannon to hold the opponent in check.

Several offenses and defenses had been carried out since the five started battling Mishis.

However, it was hard to say that the present situation was advantageous for them.

「She isn't losing patience at all huh. This woman is really like a machine.」

What Lisha and the others were aiming at was the moment Mishis focused her full strength to defeat one of them.

The situation when she left the side of her master Listelka was used to turn the table against her. The five were luring her to be impatient to finish the battle so that she would attack single-mindedly.

But, Mishis's face that was like a steel mask didn't waver at all.

She was focusing her eyes that were like crystal and calmly watched the movement of everyone.

「—Splendid. I cannot find even the smallest opening after observing this long.」

Mishis talked to herself with a small voice that no one else could catch.

The Key's Supervisors developed the Ruins and Drag-Rides. They also set up the Drag-Ride's suitability to match their bloodline.

So to speak, they were a clan who thoroughly knew and inherited all the Drag-Rides.

Even among them, Mishis was raised up as the Lord's close aide. She was given education since she was a child.

In addition to Baptism to strengthen her aptitude with Drag-Rides, nanomachines were also injected directly into her.

She endured various conditioning and battle training until the end.

She also grasped the mechanism and ability of every kind of Drag-Ride.

At first there were several hundred of her fellow elite clansmen who received such treatment. Midway, people began dropping out one by one. Mishis held out with her strength of will and polished her talent.

「My power is something that I received wholly from inheritance. Exactly because the Lords accepted our clan, that we were able to prosper. That's why

losing will be unforgivable.」

「—It's similar. You and me.」

Celis who was hovering midair seemed to hear Mishis's monologue from some point. She addressed her.

「You heard that? Though I don't need sympathy from the defeated.」

「You shouldered your own destiny, complied to it, and aimed for perfection without feeling reluctant to make every effort. You are an existence that is far more superior than even me at the time I was trying to do the same.」

「It's pointless even if you are trying to invite carelessness from me you know? My heart won't waver. After all I received a Baptism that allows me to do so.」

Mishis was controlling herself with training of stabilizing her mind as well as her thinking ability.

She was here as an incarnation of the Key's Supervisor, a machine that would continue to produce the best answer at the fastest time.

「Besides, it's upsetting to be considered the same as all of you, mere humans who consider stolen power as your own and misunderstand that you have become strong like that.」

「Hah! Don't act self-importantly you cold blooded maid! You already took the wrong path because of that arrogance and then got forced to sleep for centuries because of that!」

Lisha who was also doing Drag-Ride development cut into the conversation of the two.

The moment Tiamat fired Legion once more to hold the enemy in check, Mishis moved.

「—!？」

Azi Dahaka lowered its center of gravity while keeping its tight hold on its halberd and skated.

It was an astonishing motion, but it was as though the preliminary motion couldn't be seen at all.

Not just the dashing speed of the takeoff using the armored legs' wheels, the movement itself was also extremely smooth.

It was an impossible feat that couldn't be done without adjusting the energy distribution to the precision of several percent and having perfect control of the Drag-Ride's body balance.

But, even with such complicated procedure she had the composure to attack Lisha.

「I won't let you! I have finished grasping your range!」

「Yes, looks like you all have worked out quite a countermeasures in this short time. But, in the end it's only a hasty preparation.」

Mishis muttered in a small voice, at the same time her pupils expanded.

Lisha leaped to the air behind and fired Legion once more. At that moment, Mishis twirled on the spot.

「—!?!」

The other four who was surrounding from four directions opened their eyes wide seeing the impossible movement.

「.....That, could it be」

The one who first noticed was Philuffy whose main method of piloting was tricky movement like kicking or throwing the opponent.

If she had to say it herself, Philuffy wasn't making particularly strange movements.

What she did was nothing more than applying the martial art she learned from Magialca into Drag-Ride piloting and took the practical action.

Mishis too wasn't deliberately showing original movement to take her opponent by surprise. She was implementing one of the choices that she had practiced repeatedly for several thousand times.

One of the Legion that Lisha fired was hit back by the halberd.

「What-!?!」

「That kind of movement is possible!?!」

Even Krulcifer who specialized in precise movement yelled being unable to hide her agitation.

They would be able to predict if she dodged while repelling the Legion or blocked it and absorbed the energy, but the Legion that was hit back by the halberd flew straight to Lisha with double the speed.

The instant Lisha reflexively strengthened her barrier and defended, Azi Dahaka leaped towards Lisha.

「—Howling Roar!」

However, Lisha was also a first class Drag-Knight.

She took the fastest evasive action even while defending against the unexpected counter shot.

In order to avoid having her energy and Divine Raiment stolen by Avesta, she could only get out from the working range of the Divine Raiment.

But, Mishis neutralized the momentum of the surge of shockwave she received while swinging the Wire Tail her right hand was holding.

「—Don't tell me-?」

The halberd that was swung at first was thrown towards Yoruka who was going to backup Lisha. It was a trap to make Lisha misread the measurement.

The moment the Wire Tail entangled around Tiamat's armored arm, Mishis activated her Divine Raiment.

「—Avesta」

「Ku!? OOOOOO-.....!」

Lisha activated her Divine Raiment along with an anguished howl. An instant before Tiamat's Divine Raiment was stolen.

With that power, all of Azi Dahaka's gravity was stolen and the enemy floated to the air.

「.....!? You aren't putting burden on me. But taking away the gravity to make me float—?」

When Mishis showed a slight bafflement, attack was launched from her left,

right, and behind.

The tip of wire that was fired from Typhon, and Krulcifer's sniping.

And then the lightning attack that was fired from Celis's Lance.

In order to purposefully make use of the defenseless state, Lisha used her remaining power not for gravity increase, but to make Mishis float still in the air.

「I see, good decision. That's including all of you who immediately reacted to her idea. —But」

Three layered barriers that were deployed around Azi Dahaka drastically dampened each attack.

After stiffening slightly, she blocked the sword of Yoruka who was lying in wait below using the handle of her whip, at the same time she picked the halberd she threw away and quickly retreated.

「I received slight damage but, first I'll crush one.」

「Ku, u.....!」

Tiamat that got its energy completely sucked within a few seconds was dispelled. Lisha stood stock still on that spot. She became unable to take tangible action until she became able to use her Drag-Ride once more.

But, Mishis was still paying the greatest wariness towards her surroundings.

Surely she wouldn't commit the foolishness of easily aiming at the defenseless Lisha.

「My goodness..... So the nickname of Anti Drag-Knight isn't just an exaggeration.」

Krulcifer let out a horrified astonished sigh along with cold sweat.

Exactly because she had the experience of facing Balzeride who wore the same Drag-Ride in the past, that she understood really well Mishis's strength as a Drag-Knight.

Celis and Philuffy had grasped the attack range of the Halberd she was wielding from the battle the other day.

They were maintaining a distance where they wouldn't receive attack, but regardless of that, she saw through their countermeasures and switched to Wire Tail that possessed long range.

There wasn't a single special thing that was out of the human realm that made up her strength.

She simply knew the abilities and memorized the traits of all Drag-Rides, and thoroughly performed enormous amount of training to face all those.

「If I can speak frankly, I'm relieved I can remove the troublesome opponent.」

「So from the start your first target was the Princess.」

But, even though she had learned the knowledge about all Drag-Rides, it would be difficult for her to respond against a Drag-Ride that had been drastically modified.

Therefore, Mishis designated Lisha as the biggest threat among the five and focused all her strength to remove her first.

「Haa, haa.....don't underestimate me you damn expressionless cold-blooded maid! It's a great mistake if you think that I'm done just from this much!」

Lisha yelled while walking backward with her Sword Device at the ready. Perhaps she wished to say that she could give command even though she couldn't fight anymore.

Certainly it would be really helpful to have someone who had the full picture of the battlefield and could give advice.

Even though she would shoulder a great risk by staying here, it would only increase their chance of victory by a miniscule amount, but it was a small mercy that the Divine Raiment that was stolen was only Tiamat's gravity control.

Fafnir's future prediction, Typhon's Divine Raiment neutralization, Lindwurm's instant teleportation, Yato no Kami's enforced control.

Gravity manipulation was also powerful but, their chance of victory would be even more non-existent if it was one of the other Divine Raiments that got stolen.

「I respect that spirit, but it's unfortunate. The battle situation cannot be

overturned anymore by the time I obtained Suppressor.」

The remaining four people held their breath towards Mishis's cold gaze.

Krulcifer immediately sent her voice towards Yoruka using Dragon Voice.

『Can you read her consciousness's wavelength? Now that it has become like this, we can only rely on your sword technique though.』

As expected, there was nobody who could surpass Mishis in regards to piloting a Drag-Ride.

But, the special move that Kirihome Yoruka used—Instant Strike, was a blade of certain kill that read the wavelength of consciousness and took advantage of the gap of the subconscious.

Because it was unrelated with Drag-Ride specs and piloting skill, it should be effective even against Mishis.

『Of course I can read it. But—I don't think hitting her once with Instant Strike will result in anything. A slash that simply lands won't be able to pierce that three layered barrier and inflict lethal damage.』

『——』

Krulcifer was at a loss hearing Yoruka's reply.

To breakthrough Azi Dahaka's abnormal defensive power, there was a need to unleash an attack of full power from close range.

Just like when Balzeride was defeated in the past, there was no other way except to aim at her using one of the three hidden techniques, Recoil Burst.

「You are really composed to look the other way and talk.」

The instant Krulcifer returned her focus to Mishis, Azi Dahaka skated even faster than before with a movement that once more didn't show any preliminary motion beforehand.

Krulcifer who was targeted flew to the back to escape, but Mishis stuck close to her.

「Attack, Krulcifer! She will keep chasing even if you run away! —But, why is she even faster than before!? You mean, you were holding back when it was

with me!?!」

The Divine Drag-Ride of land battle type had heavy weight due to its solid armor and weapons.

But, just by using Suppressor to erase the Drag-Ride's weight didn't mean that its speed would simply get faster.

Rather the wheels of the armored legs would float and the speed would drop instead.

With the nature of a land battle type Drag-Ride to move by running on the ground, lowering the friction might even take away its mobility.

But, the way Mishis used Suppressor was different.

She had mastered the method to put the Divine Raiment to practical use combined with the trait of a land battle type Drag-Ride.

「She is keeping the gravity normal only at the part of the armored legs that touched the ground while lightening only the upper body to accelerate!?!」

Celis muttered dumbfounded, but Krulcifer escaped outside the range of Divine Gate, so she couldn't back her up immediately.

「Krulcifer! Fire and drive back the enemy! If the enemy has become lighter—」

「Yes, I know!」

Hearing Lisha's yell, Krulcifer activated Wise Blood.

She predicted Mishis's attack using the prediction of the future few seconds ahead.

For the time being she confirmed that she would be able to obtain distance from the opponent using her sniping and then she carried it out.

「Then, prepare yourself.」

The halberd that Mishis held back until it was completely behind was then let go into a flash of vertical slash.

The sure-kill attack that was tinged with strong energy was blocked by Fafnir's Auto Shield.

It was an automatic defense of seven shields, but if Mishis used Avesta, this Special Armament wouldn't last long. Krulcifer had already known that from the battle against Balzeride.

Therefore, she didn't let go of that instant.

「—Freezing Cannon!」

Bam-! Krulcifer pulled the trigger of her sniper rifle at a position that almost touched Azi Dahaka's shoulder.

It was an attack of extreme speed with delicateness.

The freezing bullet that was fired from the muzzle stole the movement of the armored shoulder along with the impact.

Because she only stressed on making the attack hit, she was unable to drive the enemy into being unable to act, but she succeeded in offense and defense at the same time.

The heavy weight land battle type Drag-Ride Azi Dahaka was blown backward by that attack.

Because Mishis was making the weight of her Drag-Ride light using the Divine Raiment Suppressor that she stole, it became easy for it to be influenced by outside forces too.

That was what Lisha pointed out just now.

「That's a splendid skill. I even feel proud as a fellow clansman.」

「Is that so? Surely it's troubling for both of us to value just this much that highly.」

Krulcifer responded with a bluffing smile while letting out cold sweat.

The special armament Auto Shied got the energy sucked out from it and they were dispelled. She now became defenseless.

If after this Fafnir's frame got touched, her Divine Raiment would be plundered.

But, she won the gamble in the exchange just now.

Philuffy and Celis already took position at where Mishis was falling to. They

were aiming at the moment she landed.

At that instant when Krulcifer grasped the situation and her tension relaxed slightly.

She could hear the yell from Lisha who was standing still on the ground.

「Don't be slow Krulcifer! The enemy's aim is still you!」

「.....-!?」

The cannon muzzles stretching out from Azi Dahaka's shoulders—Devil's Glow shined and fired a torrent of impact energy.

Because her automatic defense Auto Shield was taken away, Krulcifer immediately tried to take the option of dodging but—

「-.....!? What's this!? The propulsion control, is changed—?」

An out of place feeling arose from the center of gravity of Fafnir's frame.

It was as though it became impossible to calculate the trajectory for flying.

The instant Krulcifer reacted to that in bewilderment, she was swallowed by the bombardment.

Receiving that terrific impact, she was struck down to the ground right away.

「-.....aah.....!」

「Krulcifer!?」

The fallen Fafnir was attacked even more by Suppressor and it was crucified on the ground. The armor was raising high pitched metallic sounds and creaked.

Krulcifer endured the intense pain where it felt like her whole body was breaking while she comprehended Mishis's technique.

She used the Divine Raiment of gravity control that she stole from Tiamat and tampered with Fafnir's gravity of each part of the armor haphazardly.

When Krulcifer was shaken by the crumbling body balance of her flying type Drag-Ride, she was hit by the bombardment from the enemy's shoulders. At the same time when the attack hit, next gravity pressure that was several times than normal was applied on her and Fafnir was knocked down toward the

ground.

If what Mishis had done was put into words, that was all there was to it.

However, even Krulcifer never imagined that she was going to attack and manipulating gravity that skillfully at the same time, while facing four Divine Drag-Ride users simultaneously.

「—Kuh!? AAAAH!」

Furthermore the multiplied gravity broke through the armor's endurance.

The effect of Suppressor cut off at the last moment, but Fafnir's armor was also dispelled.

Mishis changed her falling trajectory with the recoil from Devil's Glow's shot. Celis and Philuffy attacked, but everything was avoided within a hair's breadth and she retreated.

With this, only three people remained who could fight in this place.

It became only Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka.

「Krulcifer! Hang in there!」

Lisha who somehow recovered her body's freedom lifted Krulcifer in her arms while breathing roughly.

Her bones weren't broken, but several places on her body were hit by pressure.

「I'm fine..... Is what I want to say but, as expected this is a heavier injury than yours. It's not so severe that my bones broke, but if I got bruises all over, I won't be able to show myself to Lux-kun.」

Krulcifer acted tough, but her breathing was so weak it felt like it would stop anytime.

「You idiot! What do you think we are forming a pact for! Even if that happens, I'll at least give you time! Though it will be me who makes Lux mine in the end!」

「Even though you won't yield at the slightest, but you are really principled aren't you..... I don't hate that side of yours.」

Krulcifer smiled wryly, then her eyes closed and she lost consciousness.

Lisha's gaze returned to the battlefield while she was still holding her classmate in her hands.

「—With this there are only three people left. You all are getting more and more cornered.」

Mishis who recovered her balance declared without a single change in her expression.

But, even after losing two people, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka's expressions didn't show any uneasiness.

「In my country, it was said that only in a predicament people can really show their strength. Besides, in reality, even you were unable to be unharmed from the exchange just now, isn't it?」

「.....」

Mishis responded to Yoruka's bewitching smile with silence.

Azi Dahaka's left shoulder was frozen. Although the joint wasn't solidified, the barrier generation device was partly sealed.

It was a small injury on a little spot.

However, she also knew that it might become a lethal wound in a battle between the equally powerful.

Since the time Mishis became aware of her surrounding, she was undefeated in battle versus other Drag-Knights.

That was why in contrast to her threat that sounded like she was convinced of her victory, she understood that this was a situation where she couldn't let her guard down.

The only thing that could be called Azi Dahaka's weak point wasn't how it had no flying ability, once the armor had been destroyed physically, even if it absorbed energy it wouldn't be able to repair itself by its own strength.

On the other hand, it was the only path of survival for Lisha and the others.

Krulcifer went for that and she succeeded in not letting her Divine Raiment

getting stolen in her defeat.

「She has done her part enough. The rest will be our turn to meet the expectation.」

Celis readied her Lance along with Lindwurm while she looked straight at Mishis.

Even after two of them had been defeated, they didn't show the color of despair on their face.

The extremely deathly battle resumed.

Part 5

「Eh.....?」

Drip, drip, fresh blood was trickling on the stone paving of the castle town.

Even though Airi exposed herself in order to save her friends, Zweigbergk ignored it and he was about to kill the Triad. It was at that time.

A girl who suddenly appeared knocked down the situation into even more chaos.

「You, bastard.....-!?」

The one who was bleeding wasn't Airi or even the Triad, but Zweigbergk who was going to swing down his Blade just now.

A flesh hand that thrust like a spear gouged his chest from behind together with Tarasque's armor.

「.....What is, going on? This is—」

「I don't, know. But, something like this.....」

「You are, Hayes Vi Arcadia.....」

Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct, the three of them muttered while still lying on the ground.

Each of them had a broken arm. They were feeling pain that made them unable to move while their attention was taken away by that bizarre sight.

「Guh, you, are.....!」

「What's wrong, you senile old gopher. Did you forget my face? Senility is really terrifying eh.」

The girl who was wearing a pure white robe on top of a pilot suit was without a doubt Hayes.

But, her body should be unable to do any activity except by using Baptism of strengthening applied on her. And even the remaining light of her life should be on the verge of running out.

But the strangest thing was that the girl right now wasn't even wearing a Drag-Ride.

She pierced the armor of the Divine Drag-Ride Tarasque with her bare hand.

「How.....! How are you here-!?How can you do something like this-!?」

The stabbing arm slipped out when the old soldier pitched forward. He turned around while slashing with his Blade.

But, Hayes easily blocked even that with her bare hand and crushed the blade that she caught in her grip.

「Wha.....!?」

「Kukukukuku. I see, so it's like that huh. Looks like your master didn't tell you at all about the essential things. What a pitiful man.」

「Answer me!? What the hell are you!?」

Even though the blade was broken, Zweigbergk continued to pour his strength to push his Blade.

And yet, Hayes who should be just a petite girl didn't even give an inch.

That smile that was filled with composure suddenly warped into an evil look.

「You're telling me to answer!? A lowlife small fry who is nothing more than an errand boy of the Blue Tyrant is.....! Know your place!」

Her free left fist exploded into motion and pierced Tarasque's shoulder.

The barrier was drilled through and the armor smashed. Even the Force Core was gouged out. The armor was dispelled and Zweigbergk was blown away.

「Goh, gahah.....!?」

Zweigbergk's torso was torn off just with that and he was reduced to a lump of meat miserably.

A track of fresh blood was remaining above the stone paving where the castle

town of the empire was projected.

「.....So this is the power of Sacred Eclipse's main body, ha-ha-ha! Magnificent. The god has chosen this me! I am the true successor of the empire! It's not that fake prince or even my big sisters! It's this me!」

The eyes of Hayes who was talking loudly were shining glaringly with seven colors.

From a glance, Hayes looked calmer mentally than before, but her look was filled with inhuman zeal.

It was as though she was an incarnation of an Abyss—no, a god.

「Now then, I finished the confirmation. The current me doesn't even need a Drag-Ride. Insects like you all already don't matter but, it doesn't seem bad to crush you all here as harassment to that fake prince.」

「—!?!」

Airi slightly staggered when those eyes with mysterious rainbow color were turned towards her.

They were able to escape from Zweigbergk's threat, but now a threat that was far more terrifying than that appeared.

Besides, the situation in the surroundings was strange.

The old castle site where the scenery of the Arcadia Empire was projected showed angel type Abyss flying around and devouring the people in the area.

When they finished eating, they headed towards the direction of the castle.

Airi too had finished the first trial from the Automata, but what was happening right now?

Suddenly Hayes's eyes flashed and she stared at one Abyss that was flying in the area.

「Hahaha. So it's like that, I don't even need to be bothered myself. It's a waste of time. You all can just wait to be eaten there. This abandoned capital will soon turn into hell. However, well, if Ane-ue knew about this, then she is really a villain yeah. No, it's the right act. It's a worthy mission for the

descendant of the Lords.」

「.....」

Airi wanted to ask just what was she saying, but right now they mustn't agitate Hayes.

After all, their fate would be decided by which way the dice of god's whim would roll to.

「But, I'm not gonna hand it over to you, Aneue-sama. Of course not to the traitor Aeril too. I'll be the one to guide this world. I'll make you bitches watch hell too yeah, until then just shiver in fear there.」

Hayes left behind an evil smile and left from there.

No, she shined with light and then her existence vanished.

After that nothing remained behind.

It was only Zweigbergk's corpse that showed that the happening until now was reality.

「Just now, space teleportation.....? One of the Ragnarok, Deus ex Machina's—」

Airi who had seen that Ragnarok's battle against Lux noticed that baffling common point.

No matter how much Hayes's body was strengthened with Elixir, was it also possible to make her learn a powerful supernatural ability that was like a Divine Raiment?

No, the ability of the girls of the Lords was nothing more than body strengthening and making use of a part of the Ruins' power through Baptism.

In other words that was—something else that was different from a Nocturnal and a Ragnarok—

「Let's stop..... It's useless to keep thinking about it. More importantly, everyone, thank you very much. I'm glad, you are all safe.」

Airi let out a deep sigh and spoke with teary eyes.

「Haha..... our state really isn't cool as knights protecting a princess though.」

「We gotta be thankful, that we are simply able to survive.」

「Yes. We can at least show our faces to Lux-san, that we were able to protect Airi safely.」

The expressions of Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct relaxed even with the color of pain dyeing their faces.

If they could be greedy, they wanted to go tell the others about what just happened, but they understood that they had no spare strength for it.

Right now they could only hide for a while and pray for Lux's safety.

Lisha and the others would defeat Mishis, Lux and Singlen would stop Listelka, and Magialca and the others would reach the center of Avalon in that opening.

They were still wishing for the success of those, but two abnormalities were occurring.

Singlen who ordered Zweigbergk to aim for Airi in this pressing situation, and Hayes who was transformed into an atypical existence. It also wouldn't be strange if Sacred Eclipse appeared anytime—

「Don't tell me, Hayes just now was—!」

「What's wrong, Airi?」

「—It's nothing. I'll go get the first-aid kit from the luggage that we left at the other side.」

Airi pushed down the unknown uneasiness and ran.

At that time, the figure of Lolotte wearing a Drake appeared at a distant view. Perhaps he was looking for Zweigberk.

The battle of the girls met an end for the moment.

Part 6

「—The same tactic again? It's a bit of a disappointment.」

The Arcadia Empire—imperial capital's central arena.

In the fighting stage where a scenery that boasted splendor was projected, the fierce battle of Mishis versus Syvalles was continuing.

Lisha lent her shoulder to Krulcifer who lost consciousness and glared at the battlefield with a grim face.

200 ml from her location, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka were repeatedly surrounding Mishis who was piloting Azi Dahaka and held her in check.

Each one of them coordinated with each other to deploy three kinds of attacks.

The flying type Lindwurm maintained the distance from the sky while attacking with Lightning Flash from the Lance.

Because even Azi Dahaka couldn't defend against lightning attack, it was forced to dodge.

The land battle type Typhon grasped the rubbles on the surrounding ground and threw it.

Otherwise it would pierced a huge rubble with the tip of Pile Anchor and pulled it out, and threw it like an improvised flail.

Yoruka made use of Yato no Kami's leaping ability to kicked on the air and slashed at Mishis.

They launched different attacks from three directions and three altitudes while looking for an opening, but Mishis wasn't perturbed at all. She continued to deal with the attacks.

「What, a woman..... That damn cold blooded maid!」

Even if their attacks were mainly from long or medium range, she didn't show the slightest weakness even though there was also her shoulder armor that was destroyed by Krulcifer.

Even though she was constantly making use of Full Connect, there wasn't any sign that her stamina was exhausted.

「—There is no end to this. At this rate we will keep Aruji-sama waiting. That mustn't happen.」

Yoruka muttered with a smile, then she stopped holding Mishis in check from mid-range and approached Mishis.

Lisha who saw that immediately raised her voice.

「What are you doing ero woman! Don't enter her Divine Raiment's range!」

「Do you think it won't reach you? —Suppressor!」

The instant Yato no Kami entered just for a single step into Mishis's range that they had avoided until now, severe gravity burden assaulted Yato no Kami.

The four armored legs creaked, and the stone paving that was used as foothold was smashed and sunk down.

What Mishis aimed for wasn't to steal her Divine Raiment, but to prevent attacks using Suppressor.

She turned into offense right after Celis and Philuffy's attacks ended, in the timing where no obstruction could come.

「It will be my victory if I can just take that Divine Raiment.」

Yoruka immediately met Mishis with her katana shaped Blade, but her movement was dull due to the gravity burden.

Mishis dodged the slash by a hair's breadth while dealing an attack with her halberd to the armor.

The barrier was broken through and the darkness colored armor was smashed from the torso.

But, the tip of the sword that Yato no Kami thrust out at the same time stabbed into the right armored foot of Azi Dahaka.

「—!？」

The Drag-Ride's barrier was deployed with the focus to the front.

Thus the tips of the limbs had thin defense even for Azi Dahaka.

And then,

「Why can't I plunder the Divine Raiment? Spell Code's command is, going toward me—」

Mishis frowned while confirming Yoruka's plan.

「Yes, I had given an order beforehand. From the Kumo no Ito crawling underfoot, a command to cancel the use of your Divine Raiment—」

With just a contact of several seconds, the plundering of the Divine Raiment by Avesta would show effect faster than Spell Code.

But, at the time when Mishis walked closer at Yoruka's opening, the Special Armament steel wire that was already laid out on the ground activated the Spell Code.

The command was focused in making the Divine Raiment unusable rather than controlling the enemy's movement.

And then, in exchange of getting her armor destroyed, Yoruka damaged the armored leg of Azi Dahaka.

「You were aiming for weakening me from the beginning?」

「I cannot fight satisfactorily at all with this body anyway.」

Yoruka smoothly confirmed the answer while showing an unusually cheerful smile.

The wound from her defeat against Singlen hadn't fully recovered. Then she was doing a forced march to reach the Marcafal Kingdom, in addition at the battle where she took on seven Ragnarok, the current Yoruka couldn't even display half of her true strength.

Then before her stamina was chipped off in this stalemate, she sacrificed herself and entrusted the rest to her comrades.

「So you turned yourself into a sacrificial pawn? The Drag-Knight who was

even called as the Empire's Assassin Blade is actually a really cowardly person.」

Mishis took a distance for the moment and lightly performed a check on her movement.

The barrier generation device on the left shoulder and the right armored leg were damaged.

It was impossible to move with full power, but she could still exhibit 70% of power.

「Perhaps that's true.」

Yoruka whose armor was dispelled retreated unexpectedly easily.

Without pause she walked towards Lisha's position and turned around towards Mishis.

「But, it's not a bad feeling, to be able to remove Aruji-sama's enemy even without being able to wield my own strength.」

「I don't know if it's one of my hand or leg, but do you think that the remaining girls can defeat me just from this little damage?」

When Mishis sent a calm gaze to Celis and Philuffy, Yoruka's lips loosened with a chuckle.

「You are, the same like me in the past.」

「.....?」

The line that Yoruka suddenly spoke caused Mishis to frown slightly.

「You blindly believe in your mission, and polished up your skills like a single sacred sword along with an absolute self-confidence. Your steely determination surely won't yield no matter what stands in your way. But, you will lose against a feeling that is even stronger than that.」

「Just when I wondered what you were going to say, it's only nonsense. If you yield only because of such insignificant thing, then it's only proof of your immaturity.」

Mishis adjusted her stance, she changed the grip on her halberd and took a forward-bent posture.

Lisha who saw that sensed danger and quickly raised her voice.

「Celis! Philuffy! Be careful! She is going into offense!」

Because the danger of Yoruka's Spell Code was gone, and then because there were only two remaining enemies, Mishis changed her fighting style.

She changed her grip on the halberd from a short hold to make it easier to move the halberd with long handle flexibly, into a hold for large swing that could exhibit greater might.

She finally moved to attack from her own initiative. Her stance was one to bring down the opponent.

The next moment after Lisha sensed that, Azi Dahaka accelerated with a speed that the eye couldn't follow.

Celis who fired lightning attack from the tip of her Lance flew back, but even though Mishis was hit by it, her halberd still struck in a sweeping blow.

「.....-, u!」

Celis's armored arm immediately blocked it, but the blow could be felt through it into her chest. Celis's face distorted in pain.

It was a power to the degree that instantly broke through the barrier.

But, Mishis's Azi Dahaka also exposed a fatal opening for the first time.

「Now airheaded girl! Bring down the maid!」

Lisha who saw that raised her voice even while shuddering.

A Drag-Ride that was hit by Celis's Lightning Flash would temporarily have its movement paralyzed and its power output would also decrease.

Furthermore because Mishis had some of her body parts fused with the Drag-Ride using Full Connect, she would receive even more damage.

If she was in the middle of the attack's effect, she wouldn't be able to activate Avesta.

Thus it was a chance of a lifetime.

Philuffy didn't overlook that and fired Pile Anchor, winding it around Azi

Dahaka.

「I'll kick, so be careful.」

Philuffy entangled the wire on the armor's four limbs and sealed the halberd's movement, at the same time she entered the stance for a spinning kick.

She would roll the wire and drag Azi Dahaka closer. When the kick blew away the opponent, Celis would also cooperate and deal an attack to bring the enemy down.

「Ei」

Instantly, Pile Anchor pulled Azi Dahaka closer with tremendous speed and Philuffy unleashed the spinning kick with all her strength in a counter.

At that instant, Mishis who should be limp due to the lightning attack turned a cold eye glint towards Philuffy.

「It's pointless no matter what you do! You won't make it in time until your Divine Raiment reactivates!」

Lisha who saw that gave a push to Philuffy with her words.

To activate a Divine Raiment, the concentration and Drag-Ride energy needed to do that were a lot more than doing other actions.

Even if, for example, Azi Dahaka's Divine Raiment would just barely make it in time, Philuffy's attack couldn't be defended anymore.

When the full power kick from Typhon landed, Azi Dahaka's armor burst open.

The three layer of tough barriers were broken through, and the front part of the armor was smashed apart.

But, Philuffy herself was also blown backward at the same time as though she was affected by the recoil.

「.....Wha-!？」

Lisha certainly saw it at that moment.

The sight of the lapis lazuli colored shockwave that was emitted from Azi Dahaka's armor directly hitting Philuffy's armor.

It wasn't Howling Roar.

Mishis shouldn't even have time to fire that.

「Most likely, it's the so called Reflector that we heard from them.」

Yoruka muttered without a single change in her expression. Lisha gasped and guessed the situation.

The Special Armament of Azi Dahaka that they heard about from Celis, from the battle the other day.

The internal device that unleashed shockwaves as a counter to the surroundings right after the attack landed.

Because it was a type that activated automatically like Fafnir's Auto Shield, it was possible to activate it even in the instant where Mishis only barely recovered from the electric attack.

「But, how can it have that much power when it's only an automatic counterattack!? Even Typhon is a land battle type Divine Drag-Ride! Its defensive strength is—」

「Yes, that's right. But wasn't the opponent completely limp just now? It was in order to not use energy for other things and focused only on the special armament.」

「-.....!? She predicted it? The exchange just now」

Lisha comprehended an instant after Yoruka pointed it out.

Originally the power of Reflector was quite strong, but in the end it was only to the degree to stop further attacks from the enemy.

But, if she discarded all other actions from the beginning and focused the energy only into it, then it would be a different story.

「When Krulcifer-san and I also attacked before this, the counterattack wasn't so strong, but that too were preparatory steps for this.」

「Run away! Airheaded girl—!」

Lisha who grasped the situation reflexively raised her voice.

But, Philuffy too was unable to escape immediately.

Because she was entangling Pile Anchor on Azi Dahaka's limbs, even though they were both blown away from each other, the chain stopped them midway.

Right after the wire went taut and their motion halted to a standstill, Philuffy took off the wire in order to avoid Avesta. Azi Dahaka took that instantaneous opening and charged.

「——」

Philuffy who was unbalanced reacted by letting out a punch to meet her attack even then.

But, she was a step short.

The straight punch that was unleashed was dodged by Mishis who ducked low and her halberd hit Typhon's shoulder.

「.....Aa, u」

There was a sound of metal crumpling.

Typhon's armor was dispelled by the impact and Philuffy was sent flying to the back.

「Philuffy!」

Lisha spontaneously yelled, but Philuffy put her own hand on the ground and then with a twirl she landed on her feet.

「.....I'm fine. Typhon cannot be moved for a while but, I'm alright.」

The attack didn't hit the person herself. In the end it seemed she was only sent flying by the inertia.

In addition there was also the physical ability and agility of the person herself, so she avoided serious injury.

Lisha who confirmed Philuffy's safety stroked her chest in relief.

However, because the Force Core in the shoulder was hit strongly, Typhon's armor was automatically dispelled and she fell on one knee.

And then, something even more terrifying than Philuffy's inability to keep fighting happened.

「This is bad. Typhon was touched by Azi Dahaka for a full second.」

Yoruka smoothly muttered a dangerous matter with a composed tone.

Until now they had concentrated all their nerves to at least prevent the plundering of their Divine Raiments, but with this even Typhon's Missing Faith was taken away after Tiamat's Suppressor.

Only Celis alone was remaining, but she too couldn't be said to be in a perfect condition.

Although each of her armaments was still going strong, she just got hit by Mishis's halberd before this.

「Can she win? Against that coldblooded maid who has stolen two Divine Raiments, at this rate—」

At that time when Lisha's expression distorted in anguish, her shoulder was lightly tapped.

Krulcifer who was laid down behind lifted her body and stood up even though she was sweating from her forehead.

「.....Let's believe in her.」

「Krulcifer!? Never mind that, just sleep! With that body you cannot use—」

「I know. I won't move and I also won't force myself. I just want to watch with my own eyes.」

Either way, the match would be decided by the next exchange.

If Celis couldn't defeat Mishis, then at that moment that would be the end of their fate.

「You're right. It will be a loss to miss watching this.」

Yoruka nodded in agreement. She continued her words with her usual smile.

「Our victory from everything that we have accumulated until now—」

Her gaze was quietly directed towards Celis who was readying her Lance.

「Have you resolved yourself? You have lost even the one in ten thousand chance of victory right now.」

Mishis asserted with a cool expression and brandished her halberd.

Azi Dahaka was greatly damaged from her fight against Philuffy, but her procurement of Missing Faith, the Divine Raiment neutralization ability was greater still.

In addition, Celis's Lindwurm wasn't undamaged.

When the aspect of each side's stamina was also included, it appeared that Mishis was still the one with a far greater advantage.

But, there was no hesitation on the face of Celis who was the last one remaining.

「No, I'm finally able to see the chance of victory. Thanks to everyone risking their life to build it, I'm able to discover it.」

「I see, so you are misunderstanding. Thinking that you can possibly win against this me just because Azi Dahaka's spec is somewhat weakened—」

Right after Mishis laughed down Celis like that, Azi Dahaka skated forward once more.

Celis dodged with an arching trajectory while intercepting using Lightning Flash, even so a twisting sweeping attack of the halberd smashed apart a part of Celis's armor.

「.....-!?」

「The energy from your Drag-Ride is taken away again by Avesta. With this I'm also above you in stamina.」

Celis was silent against that.

She only adjusted her breathing quietly and gaze at Mishis.

「It looks like you have no intention to recognize your defeat. I will give praise to that mental strength at least.」

Mishis was going to close the distance once more, it was then that Celis activated Lindwurm's Divine Raiment.

Divine Gate.

A territory of light with a radius of several dozen ml with Celis as the center

was created. Instant teleportation was performed within that territory.

That power that could build up an overwhelming advantage in offense and defense was erased by the black surge that was emitted from Azi Dahaka.

「Missing Faith.....the Divine Raiment she stole from Typhon was instantly activated!？」

That Divine Raiment placed a large burden on the user, even for the original user Philuffy. It consumed stamina and mental strength drastically.

It was something so difficult to use that Philuffy was barely able to use it by borrowing the strength of an Abyss, but using Full Connect, it wasn't difficult for Mishis with all the energy she had plundered in this fight.

「—Haaah!」

Celis seemed to have predicted even the negation of her Divine Raiment. She reacted even then and threw the Dagger she took out.

Mishis deflected it with her halberd. Celis used that opening and unleashed a thrust in a flash—but,

「Lindwurm's output is also falling with the surge just now you know? Do you think you will be able to surpass me with speed?」

GAKIIN!, the lance was swept aside by the halberd. Celis along with Lindwurm staggered.

But, she immediately recovered her balance and escaped from pursuing attacks.

「You still holding out like this means that you are wishing to be tortured to death aren't you?」

Mishis approached even more and struck with consecutive attacks of her halberd.

After thrusting up, she doubled the weight of her weapon with Suppressor and swung down. She twisted her body to dodge and then rotated to perform a sweeping blow.

Lindwurm's barrier was easily pierced and its armor was crumbling down in

the blink of an eye.

Even so no despair could be seen in Celis's expression.

She made it so the part that came into contact with the enemy was few. She made use of the spear's length and exchanged spear attacks from mid-range.

She skillfully manipulated the huge Lance and targeted Azi Dahaka's shoulder. At that moment, a territory of light was deployed to the surrounding.

「Don't tell me, it was finally stolen!? Even Lindwurm's Divine Raiment!」

Lisha who saw that shuddered and yelled.

Celis seemed to have predicted it and immediately flew behind.

Toward the mountain of rubbles of the destroyed old castle.

If there was a wall behind her, there would be no attack coming from behind using instant teleportation. It became a countermeasure against Divine Gate after a fashion.

—But, that instant. Super gravity from Suppressor attacked the area where Celis was running to.

BAKIKIKIKII-! The foothold rubbles that projected the castle town was smashed and Lindwurm's armored leg sank down.

「Checkmate. O powerful warrior of this era, this is farewell.」

Mishis who was convinced of victory unleashed a full power thrust with her halberd. Celis muttered at that instant.

「—Howling Roar!」

「-.....!?」

The energy that was focused in the head part of the Drag-Ride became a vortex of shockwave that was liberated out.

Even though her movement was sealed by gravity, even though she couldn't use her Divine Raiment, if it was just the basic function of a Drag-Ride, it could be activated without any hindrance.

Although Mishis who was taken by surprise had her momentum reduced, she

was still forcing her way through using her barrier as a shield.

Mishis forcefully screwed in the thrust with all her strength, at the same time the counter from Celis's Lance also stabbed Azi Dahaka's armor.

「She's defeated!? No, is it a draw!？」

Lisha yelled, at the same time Celis's Lance emitted lightning.

「Double layered little trick at this point in time, that's quite something.」

Mishis pulled away her halberd with a wry smile, dispelled the gravity force, and took her distance.

The flash from the lightning attack that Lightning Lance fired.

Just before their attacks crossed each other, the flash blinded Mishis's eyes and Celis barely dodged the opponent's thrust.

Celis cut her way through the absolutely deathly predicament with only two tactics.

「But, is there any meaning in resisting like this? The energy of your Drag-Ride is stolen by Avesta each time we perform an exchange. Now that it is one-on-one, you won't win without landing a sure kill attack on me.」

「It seems so. —Then, perhaps I'll land one.」

And then, Celis removed a part of her armor that was ruined.

「Break Purge— Leaving behind only the minimum propulsion frame and armor, Celis's suicide attack huh.....」

Lisha who knew that style was letting out cold sweat seeing Celis's form.

Break Purge that was originally a basic technique was sublimed by Celis until it became an original technique that was only hers.

The armor was lightened by discarding everything except the necessary parts to the utmost limits. The places where energy was distributed to were also reduced, increasing the attack power.

As the compensation for the increase in power and speed, the defensive power was greatly reduced.

If she fully received an attack by a Divine Drag-Ride in that state, she wouldn't be able to avoid instant death.

If it was Mishis who thoroughly knew about a Drag-Ride's trait and function, surely it would be possible for her to deal with even Celis's suicide attack style.

She closed the distance gradually with an expression like a mask that was the same until now.

The abilities of the Divine Raiments that she stole using Avesta already reached saturated state.

Even if she was going to absorb energy from Lindwurm until it was dried up, with how thin its armor had become, she would have to get closer to absorb the energy.

It would be the final exchange that would be done in the range of sure-kill.

Mishis who saw that the end was near silently asked.

It wasn't a diversion to make an opening, or a mental attack to shake up the enemy. Words naturally welled up from inside herself that was covered behind the mask.

「It's splendid. Battle skill and physical strength that are polished until that far, and then your mental strength. They are worthy of praise. But, you are not a match against me. After all, I am a Key's Supervisor who is shouldering the mission of serving the Lords from a thousand years ago. I am the only imperial guard of the imperial princess.」

She spoke out her belief also to strengthen herself by applying self-suggestion.

Azi Dahaka was also damaged here and there, but it could still move enough as she wished.

—She could defeat the opponent. She would defeat the opponent.

Mishis gazed at her opponent with eyes that were filled with a will of steel.

The Drag-Knight Girl who she should respect, for being the first person who fought her until this far.

「In the end, is it really just as you say?」

Celis spoke her words straightforwardly, then she threw three Daggers midair and immediately flew forward.

Because she had removed part of her armor, she manifested an acceleration that was double than before.

She unleashed a downward thrust from midair, with her momentum behind it.

「Just what are you planning—? Divine gate!」

In response Mishis activated Lindwurm's stolen Divine Raiment and instantly circled behind Celis.

She let out a swing with all her strength to the defenseless back. In that instant, Daggers were falling before her eyes.

「-.....! You predicted that I will circle behind you!?!」

Mishis whose attention was taken by the Daggers only slightly stopped moving her hand.

Celis turned around at that opening and her Lance danced.

Once, twice, thrice.

The shoulder that lost the barrier generation device due to Krulcifer's sniping, the armored leg that was damaged by Yoruka's katana, the joints of the armored arms, and each weak spots were stabbed consecutively.

Mishis was flustered by the unleashed fierce attack that was like a heavy rain, even so Mishis didn't fall behind.

Full Connect partly integrated her body with her Drag-Ride, so she could control her Drag-Ride with the same sensation as if it were her own body.

She accomplished a unity of man and machine and also had a complete grasp of Lindwurm's movement. She had no blind spot.

「Looks like you have toyed with various strategies, but in close-quarter combat, winning against this me—」

A shock ran through the expression of Mishis who handled all the thrusts and

backed away.

Right after that, the armor that covered the four limbs of Azi Dahaka crumbled down into pieces.

「.....!?! Did the attacks, hit? How— I certainly had, dodged, them.....」

The tip of Celis's Lance that lunged out in godspeed slipped through Mishis's defense and shaved out Mishis's armor with certainty.

Through that Azi Dahaka's solid armor was also weakened.

「What is going on.....? How is Celis's attack starting to hit?」

Lisha who was looking from the side was also similarly bewildered.

In the place of Philuffy and Krulcifer who were also looking dumbfounded towards that sight, Yoruka silently took up the role of explaining.

「It's simple. She is only reading the breathing of the opponent. Just like how Aruji-sama saw through the opponent's preliminary motion when attacking— she too is hammering in her lance while seeing through the opponent's defense.」

「.....!?!」

—Breath.

That was the conduct of the flesh body that would surely appear on the surface in the middle of offense and defense that were carried out in full strength.

Celis foresighted the timing and strength of breathing that Mishis performed, from there she predicted the opponent's movement in general and reacted to it.

Mishis who heard that muttered with a disbelieving look.

「Impossible. I have finished training day after day to master control so that my breathing won't be read and the like. For me, who was able to obtain the data of all Drag-Rides, to fall behind you is just—」

「No, you are wrong. Even Drag-Rides are something that humans control. No matter what habit and personality will be mixed into it. And then—」

Celis gazed straightforwardly towards Mishis with an aloof gaze and declared.
Yes.

For Drag-Ride users at Mishis's level, they surely would have finished revising their movement so it would be extremely hard to predict their movement and habit from their piloting.

But, in the end it was something that was only within Mishis's own comprehension.

The body that became markedly fatigued through consecutive battles against formidable enemies wouldn't move like normal no matter what.

Until now she had never faced a Drag-Knight stronger than her, no, far from that there wasn't even any Drag-Knight who could match her.

Therefore Celis won against her in the strength of predicting the enemy in a battle between Drag-Knights.

「You are an Anti Drag-Knight, but even though you can perfectly predict a Drag-Ride's movement, you are unable to learn as far as the person's habit. In your Full Connect state, the more you align your flesh body with the Drag-Ride—the more it becomes easier for me to predict your movements.」

「.....」

Fusing a part of the body with a Drag-Ride brought many advantages, at the same time it was also a double-edged sword.

The endlessly swift and precise control—and then the sharing of senses caused the body's information to be conveyed through the Drag-Ride even more.

Mishis thought that her habit was hidden even then.

She didn't notice until now, until she encountered an equally powerful person.

「Such thing.....is impossible. For me, to be defeated, by a Drag-Knight—!」

Mishis activated Avesta as though to deny Celis's words.

Next she wouldn't use it to steal ability, but she would pour her everything to

plunder only the opponent's energy.

She would steal all of Lindwurm's energy. Even if she was losing in the exchange of close-quarter combat, she would dispel the Drag-Ride armor itself.

「Celis!」

Lisha who saw Azi Dahaka charging forward fiercely raised an agitated voice.

In response Celis deeply readied her Lance.

An instant before she and Mishis clashed, a scene of her with Lux was resurrected at the back of her mind.

The memory of her who was training alone everyday because she was too strong and the young man who would accompany her sometimes in such training.

「Mishis V Xfer. Your strength on the whole is far above mine.」

Within an instant, various memories rushed inside Celis's chest.

The Anti Drag-Knight who devoted her everything to her mission and pedigree, polishing her skill until she could boast as the strongest.

If they fought fairly—no, even if the five of them challenged her with perfect condition, originally they still wouldn't have any chance of victory.

But, there was the existence of the sixth person with Celis and the others.

—No. That existence was far more bigger, greater.

She met with Lux, and fought him.

She became able to interact with everyone in the Academy little by little, she learned and accepted a lot of things.

She was freed from her chain, the righteousness and self-sacrifice that she was obsessed with, and she was made to grow.

Exactly because of that, the current Celis could see Mishis's weak point.

(Lux. I'm really glad I could meet you. I'm grateful. That's why, let's meet again. At that time surely, my feeling will—)

「——」

Mishis's halberd that was mowing down in order to sever the torso with a flash came after she drew back the shoulders and elbows of her armored arms until the farthest limit of Azi Dahaka's mobility.

At the same time she activated Avesta to the maximum output.

If the attack hit, it would destroy the target while stealing the energy of the Drag-Ride thoroughly at the same time.

Celis who flew forward as though to respond to that didn't take evasive action.

But, in that instant. Mishis saw something unexpected and her eyes snapped wide open.

「.....Partial, deployment?」

Tuning—

Using the Sword Device to intervene into the Drag-Ride's system.

But, what Celis was using wasn't a special technique like Singlen's Senjin.

Everything other than her Lance, back wings, and shoulder armor was dispelled, transforming the shape into even further suicide attack form.

If the remaining energy of Lindwurm was few, then she would concentrate it even more at a focused part and increase the strength.

The body of Celis that accelerated until the limit turned into an arrow of light that pierced through Mishis.

「Mishis. Because you are a natural Drag-Knight, you are unable to become used to a battle against a human. —The same as me in the past. I who was too scared to get involved with someone else.」

「.....-!?!」

The exchange with Celis that was even less than an instant.

During that instant, Mishis was caught into an illusion of hearing words that she should be unable to hear.

When she noticed, the armored arm of Azi Dahaka that was swinging the halberd broke, and the Lance deeply pierced into her armor.

「Ah—」

High voltage electricity pierced Mishis's body, burning her nerves through the part of the Drag-Ride that was fused with her body.

At the same time Celis who got hit by the halberd also received the aftermath of the impact and she was blown away.

「-.....!? Celis!」

Lisha pushed through her fatigue and dashed.

Celis received the enemy's attack in the form where her armor was removed to the utmost limit.

Even her pilot suit was half destroyed by the impact. It wasn't likely that she was alive.

Krulcifer thought so and she looked down with a grieving expression, but Philuffy and Yoruka were calm.

「It's fine. She is alive.」

「Yes, though it looks like her dominant arm is broken, so I don't think she can fight for now.」

「Eh.....?」

When Krulcifer looked forward following the two's voice, there was the figure of Celis who was held up in Lisha's arms, smiling even while wheezing in pain.

「How? Even though she received such an attack from that close.」

「My? That's a line that is unlike you. Well, it also can't be helped if a master of long range sniping is estranged from the advantage of close range weapons.」

Krulcifer tilted her head in puzzlement hearing Yoruka's words, but her doubt was cleared after a few seconds.

「Don't tell me, at the end she was rushing forward herself was for such thing?」

An attack would display its maximum strength not when it was just getting unleashed, but when it arrived at the target.

The joints of the armored arm that propagated the momentum of the flying, the tip of the halberd that hit the target were exactly where the destructive force was gathered.

If the distance was closed far before the attack arrived, at the time when the attack was unleashed, then the attack power of Mishis's Azi Dahaka would also be halved.

The counter technique Critical Hit that Lux used with Scale Blade.

It was applied into Celis's spear technique.

It was a terrifying method where she accelerated herself even further to defeat the enemy.

「The halberd's blade only touched Lindwurm's back wing, the handle part simply bashed the shoulder. She received damage from the impact, but it wasn't deathly.」

After Yoruka said that, Krulcifer leaked out a relieved sigh.

And then at the spot where Mishis was blown away to, she was collapsing face up with her armor dispelled.

Because she was in Full Connect state, the electric shock from the spear burned her flesh body.

Even if she had stamina remaining, her muscles were surely paralyzed and she couldn't move satisfactorily for a while.

She was moving a trembling hand toward her chest, but it was already impossible for her to fight.

「Even so, you are being really open with us aren't you? Are you that worried about Celis-senpai I wonder?」

When Krulcifer made fun of Yoruka who was unusually looking relieved,

「Of course. After all she is superior as a womb to conceive Aruji-sama's heir. It will affect my dignity if she is lost here.」

「I see.....」

Just when she thought whether Yoruka had a feeling of fellowship budding

inside her, it was the usual Yoruka. Krulcifer was exasperated.

Although, it was great that they could win in this battle.

Crushing Mishis who was the enemy's greatest fighting strength surely made the faction of the world alliance greatly closer to victory.

The remaining concerns were only Listelka and Fugil, and then Sacred Eclipse.

「Let's go, we need to treat the injury properly.」

「Right. Also, let's also treat Mishis and bind her. She too will become a prisoner—.....!？」

Krulcifer nodded at Philuffy's words and looked forward. Right after that.

She could see Mishis moving her trembling hand and brought a horn flute to her mouth.

Yoruka immediately started running, but she was too late.

—*iiiiiii-*, the sound of the horn flute resounded in the area. One of the angel type Abyss grasped Mishis and took her away.

Looking at how her four limbs were dangling down limply, it seemed that was the best that she could do.

The Abyss that was hiding behind the arena wasn't moving until now was for the sake of escaping when an unexpected situation happened by any chance.

「—She got away. We too are in a state that cannot wear Drag-Rides, so there was also the possibility of her telling the Abyss to attack though.」

「Among us, there are several people who seem like they can fight against the Abyss even without a Drag-Ride after all. I think that was a wise decision that she made there.」

It was regrettable that Mishis escaped, but surely Mishis wouldn't be able to fight properly for a while. And it was useless even if they were feeling regret in this situation.

Right now they could only share happiness that all of them were able to survive safely.

「Looks like Celis fainted, but she is safe. Let's take a bit of a break. Also, it will

depend on Yoruka but, when Yato no Kami recovers to a usable degree, can you search the surroundings for us? I want to join up with Lux's little sister and the Triad soon and entrust Celis to them.」

「That's fine. Honestly speaking I want to fall asleep like this but, we still haven't obtained Avalon yet.」

The five comrades in arms flopped down in a circle and looked up to the sky.

They basked themselves in the victory that was grasped by their combined efforts while thinking and praying for the safety of a young man.



Part 7

「Haa, haa.....! Mishis's return is late. I don't think it's possible but, could it be she was defeated?」

On the other side, the south section of the Arcadia Empire's imperial capital.

In front of the castle gate of the castle town that was projected at the abandoned capital, Listelka was breathing roughly.

She was the first imperial princess of the Lords, and also the shrine maiden of oracle. She knew beforehand about the trials for the sake of obtaining Avalon.

By touching the clones of the Automata Arshalia that appeared in a total of seven places, one would receive three trials.

The first trial put a burden on the person's mind, a ceremony to display the person's power of resistance.

By enduring through it, the person could obtain the effect of preventing the mental disorder when Elixir was administered into them.

The second trial was a direct administering of Elixir into the person.

By strengthening both mind and flesh, the person would obtain the ability to control the mechanism at the center.

At present Listelka had also finished the second trial safely and she was taking a rest like this.

She deliberately headed to the castle gate where there was no sign of people in order to avoid contact with the enemy.

She was able to predict that if the other group realized the pattern of where the clones of Arshalia were located, they would search the important locations.

Thus, Listelka who understood the terrain took advantage of that and came here along with Fugil.

「She is a legendary heroic figure even among the Key's Supervisor. No one would be her match no matter who.」

Fugil responded to Listelka with an unchanging thin smile.

The pure white imperial princess let out a long sigh, then she leaned the back of her head on Fugil's chest.

「Do you feel disdain for me? That I am a cowardly imperial princess. I am the shrine maiden of oracle, the current imperial princess of the Arcadia Empire, in spite of that I'm doing various underhanded things.」

「.....」

Until this point Listelka did her best that she even threw away her shame.

In order to conquer the Ruins, she asked for the cooperation of the world alliance while betraying them, she used the life of the third princess Hayes as a disposable piece, and she also put the second princess Aeryl into a trap.

She introduced herself as an absolute ruler while building her advantage using schemes where she didn't care of the means she chose.

Despite that, she was forced back at the previous battle and even now she was only barely holding out.

Even sending Mishis as an assassin while Fugil was guarding her was because she was fearing the strength of the world alliance in her heart.

She was still holding the advantage in the aspect of information, but that too was only at the level that could be easily overturned by luck or coincidence.

Exactly because she understood that, she was leaning on Fugil to rely on him.

「Fugil. Am I managing this skillfully? As a descendant of the Holy Arcadia Empire, as someone who shoulders everyone's hopes, am I accomplishing my mission well?」

The girl slowly closed her eyes and reconfirmed her own feelings.

What surfaced at the back of her mind was the past memory that was resurrected in the second trial just now.

And then now, she was thinking back upon the tragedy as though tracing the

negative history of the empire.

Before Listelka and the others went into sleep, the rebels, the family of traitors obtained Drag-Rides for some reason and caused an uprising everywhere. Their momentum was rapidly increasing.

They attacked all the mansions of the wealthy people living in the imperial capital, and finally the royalty and nobility were massacred. Such sight was burned into the eyes of her young self.

Even though the Lords had developed Drag-Rides and Elixir along with the Key's Supervisors—monopolized them and carried out a perfect ruling, yet how?

Listelka separated her face from Fugil's chest and muttered while staring at the surrounding.

「How, could that kind of insurrection occur? According to a theory, at that time, it seemed there was a mysterious agitator who was allied with the family of traitors.」

「.....」

「The White Hero. It seemed that following the legend of the far away past, that person at that time was called like that. To call the person who ruined us who was living in peace as a messiah or the like, what a selfish story. Really—」

Listelka only said that and took a deep breath.

And then, she embraced herself and trembled.

Her other memory was from a thousand years at minimum after that.

The case when she was awoken from the high performance hibernation pod she was sleeping in.

Listelka who was sleeping in the Ark was accidentally discovered by the investigation team of the Old Empire. Her brethren and servants who also had just woken up were slaughtered.

When she was in despair that the family of traitors from a thousand years ago was descending on them even in this era, Fugil saved Listelka.

He killed all the troops of the Arcadia Empire that was in that place.

After getting saved, Listelka who was heavily wounded was put into sleep once more along with medical treatment. Aeril and Hayes who were relatively safe each spent their time along with Mishis to investigate the outer world.

In the end, Hayes who was holding a grudge against the rulers and the Arcadia Empire that were infesting this world started violating Listelka's command. She ran ahead and rampaged with her secret maneuvers behind the scenes.

After that, Listelka woke up once more and they arrived at the present.

「.....It seems I will be able to move soon. We have to head to the last trial.」

Listelka lifted up her face and said that with a smile.

The last, the third trial was—to face one's own ability.

There was a record that when they next exchange a contract with the main body of the Automata, Sacred Eclipse would appear.

When the person could make it obey, the path to obtain Avalon would be opened.

Inside her heart Listelka felt a question of why Sacred Eclipse, would destroy the world, also had this kind of role.

Was its ability to read a human's heart and change appearance into another person using its mimicry for the sake of this from the beginning? No, or perhaps—

It was pointless to keep thinking about it.

It was fine if she clarified the remaining puzzle when she arrived at the center of Avalon.

「I'll be relying on you Fugil. If Sacred Eclipse attacks, please take care of it. I'll manage somehow with the trial other than that.」

「Yes. Everything will be as your highness wills it.」

「Geez, please stop acting so stiff at least at this kind of time. It's finally just the two of us alone after all..... Though I feel bad for Mishis who is working hard.」

Although Listelka puffed up her cheeks in dissatisfaction, her tone was gentle.

「It will be fine. No matter what kind of trial is waiting, I will surely overcome them if you are with me.」

Listelka whispered the words of trust and she entangled her fingers with the hand of her imperial guard knight.

The last battle was approaching near.

Part 8

Around that time, in the royal castle of the Marcafal Kingdom.

Inside a stone corridor that was cold and dark, two men were standing while talking.

One of them was a young man who gave an intellectual impression from his appearance—the aide of Queen Raffi of the New Kingdom, Prime Minister Nulph.

Across from him was a man in the prime of his life with finely chiseled features, Dist Ralgris.

He was one of the great feudal lords that were called the Four Great Nobles since the era of the Old Empire. His imposing bearing was oozing out the dignity of someone with long military experience.

In fact, it was this man with abundant experience who was coordinating the expeditionary force of the New Kingdom this time, but on the surface Prime Minister Nulph was the one who was taking command.

「I have given you trouble at that time. My thanks for yielding the full authority of the alliance army to me. I'm sorry that I gave an unreasonable command.」

「It's no problem. It was a natural demand thinking from your position.」

When Prime Minister Nulph bowed his head, Dist shook his head with his stern expression.

「It will affect the honor of the New Kingdom's existing regime if I, who am a representative of the Four Great Nobles, takes command. It is only a natural consideration towards her majesty the Queen.」

The relationship of the New Kingdom and the Four Great Nobles was well-known even in other countries.

After the Old Empire crumbled, the great feudal lords, the Four Great Nobles' authority became stronger.

If Dist was the one who took command instead of Queen Raffi, it was the same as openly showing the lack of her unifying force as a queen.

Therefore, Queen Raffi maintained her dignity in the form of her aide Prime Minister Nulph accepting the right of command.

「Is her majesty's condition all right, Prime Minister Nulph?」

「Yes, the medicine I gave her majesty has a strong calming effect. Her majesty is tired from the consecutive meetings, so currently I'm asking her majesty to rest in her room.」

The royal capital of the Marcafal Kingdom.

The sovereigns of each country who evacuated safely until the royal castle received a cordial welcome and took rest.

The elite force of the alliance had been devastated, the main force that the countries wrung out was mostly collapsed.

It was a state where they could only leave the capture of Avalon wholly to the Seven Dragon Paladins, even so there was still a mountain of work to do.

Realistically—or perhaps it should be called as having no integrity, even in this situation where it concerned the fate of the world, a ruler had to constantly think about the matter after it too.

Meetings with the assumption that the world was saved and Avalon was obtained were being held continuously even now at present.

「The sharing of Avalon's technologies in case it is obtained, the establishment of alliance relationship for several years from now—it's only appropriate. The damage was this great. We had lost many Drag-Knights that we had painstakingly raised and also a lot of Drag-Rides. Now the situation is becoming one where great anxiety is remaining, for example the threat of external enemies like Dragon Marauder, or the national defense against the Abyss that appear from the Ruins.」

Nulph also nodded toward Dist's opinion.

「Besides, due to the series of news that were broadcasted by the Shadows dispatched by Listelka, dissatisfaction is heightening within a part of the New Kingdom. The faction from the old era is saying that the current Queen Raffi cannot deal with the danger.」

「What a self-serving bunch. Even though they were expressing that much dissatisfaction towards the ruling system of the Old Empire.」

「You're correct. But the populace is a selfish bunch, while politicians are greedy beings. This time, from the results the New Kingdom has lost much battle force and borrowed the strength of the Four Great Nobles. On top of that the failure of the queen is being broadcasted within the country.」

When Nulph said that with a slightly pained expression, Dist stared at empty air and said briefly.

「But, this time it cannot be helped. No matter who the king is, there will be a limit no matter how hard they work.」

「That is the reality. However those who received losses will seek someone to take responsibility. If for example the world destruction is stopped but we don't obtain enough recompense from Avalon, while a lot of troops and the people's asset are lost—」

The result would be Raffi's position as queen would be degraded by the detractors within the country.

At the very least the consuls who belonged to the Old Empire faction would take advantage of this chance to make a comeback.

If that happened, in not too long a new seed of war might be born within the New Kingdom.

「But, it's still only five years since the destruction of the Old Empire. Inviting that kind of civil war isn't a profitable plan. We have to arrange something that can convince the populace as well as the consuls, in order to heal the wounds this time too.」

「So that is what you want to consult with me, prime minister-dono.」

「.....I told my subordinates to clear out the people from here. Our talk won't

be overheard by anyone here.」

Prime Minister Nulph lowered his tone by a degree and his expression tensed.

He was going to start a discussion that would be bad if it was overheard.

Dist Ralgris also guessed Nulph's intention.

Thus he kept quiet and waited for the continuation of the words.

「Lord Dist. I want to ask you to put in a good word for me with the Four Great Nobles. While the influence of the great man Count Atismata still exists, I want you to nominate me as the new king.」

「.....」

Dist kept silent hearing the words of the young prime minister.

The ulterior motives of the statesmen were squirming behind the scenes of the battle where the fate of the world was at stake.

Part 9

「Is the second trial finished with this? How are you feeling, your highness?」
(Magialca)

「I'm feeling a little bad but, I'm fine. I think I will be able to move after resting for a few minutes.」

On the other hand, the second team of the alliance army.

The team of six people that was centered around the Lord Aeryl, then Greifer, Mel, Soffice, Rosa, and Magialca was smoothly finishing the second trial—the Baptism.

With this, finally there was only the third trial remaining.

「For the situation to go so smoothly until this far gives me a bad premonition instead. —It feels like something will happen.」

「Even though you are the youngest, don't fan up anxiety like that yeah. You're a twisted brat like usual.」

Mel was staring at the sky anxiously. Beside her, Greifer showed a sullen face.

Right now the two of them weren't wearing Divine Drag-Rides.

Their strategy was to constantly have two people preserving their stamina while no enemy was confirmed.

「I'll say this first but, I wasn't saying that without any basis at all you know? After all, it can be imagined if you are following the scene of the castle town from before this.」

「What do you mean?」

Rosa kept a smile on her face and tilted her head questioningly at Mel's muttering.

「This projected scene, if it's the history of the Arcadia Empire, then why is it

shown to us.....」

Aeril answered that by talking to herself.

「More importantly, there. It's Lux's team. It looks like they are heading behind the castle just now.」

Soffice muttered. She was gazing at the castle far away.

It was hard to see the other side of the building, but angel type Abyss were circling around and descended to the inside.

「Do you have some idea about that, Lord? Do you have memory of stopping by in that place?」(Magialca)

「—There is an imperial tomb there. I don't remember going there a lot. I don't think there is anything there but.....」

「But, the Automata is at important locations right? That means, it's possible you can find the third trial there ain't it?」

When Aeril was looking troubled, Greifer spoke his opinion casually.

「Right. It's just as you say but, for now there is no need to go there. Let's approach just barely and then wait.」

「.....? What do you mean?」

Mel tilted her head at Magialca's instruction.

「You will get it soon. We have to ascertain that guy's movement.....besides—it's not just you who is playing with plans you know, you snob.」

After Magialca muttered suggestively, they approached towards the imperial tomb. There the radar of Magialca's EX Drake showed a reaction.

「You can come out you Lords. It's pointless to hide after this far right?」

「.....!?」

With that sentence, tension ran among the Seven Dragon Paladins including Aeril.

After a slight delay, Listelka showed her figure from the shadows of the castle wall.

「When I have been preparing numerous strategies, unexpectedly none are going well. I wish to obtain the power of Avalon quickly, so that this kind of thing won't happen.」

「I also wish the same. We didn't plan to fight but—well, we have prepared beforehand to do so.」

When Magialca gazed at behind the castle, Arshalia appeared once more at the entrance of the imperial tomb that was colored with vibrant green.

Right after that, the figure of Lux and Singlen that could be seen from afar disappeared.

「After all it looks like for the third trial, the revival of Sacred Eclipse will be necessary. It will still take time until it appears as scheduled right? That was why you deliberately yielded the path to the control room that is connected to the center to Lux's group instead.」

「.....Yes. Well you are right. I too was going to attack at the last moment just like you but, Sacred Eclipse that is just revived won't come here. It also doesn't look like there will be an extension of time to wait until Mishis return. Therefore—let's settle this ahead of time.」

Right after Listelka muttered keenly, Fugil wearing Bahamut moved to stand in front of her.

「Nee-san.....」

At that time when Aeryl and also the other Seven Dragon Paladins took their stance and confronted the opponent tensely, the surrounding space distorted, and a girl appeared between them.

「—!? Who are you?」

When Magialca reacted promptly and asked, the girl who was wearing a robe that was dyed with blood spurt lifted her face.

「Hayes.....!?」

When Aeryl and Listelka were bewildered at the familiar face, the girl silently took off her hood and grinned.

Part 10

「This place, just where—?」

When Lux gasped in surprise, the unfamiliar space spread out.

A large room with silver smooth wall.

Inside, several mechanical pillars that resembled the interior of Ruins were laid out over and over again.

At the center of the room, the Automata Arshalia was standing. Beside her there was also Singlen clad in Leviathan.

Until now, everything was only projection of the past buildings laid out on the abandoned capital Guernica.

However right now there was a sense of reality.

This place wasn't fake, they were inside a real building.

「There is no Listelka or Fugil here. Don't tell me, we are the one who reached to the central first?」

In the first place, it would be sufficient if any of the three teams gained control of the central. Their objective might be in the process of completion like this.

But, even though they had overtaken Fugil's group, an anxiousness was rapidly bloating up inside Lux.

「Great work accomplishing the previous two trials, Lux Arcadia-sama. Now I will give the explanation about the true ability of Avalon and about Sacred Eclipse.」

The Automata was starting to talk with a gentle and bright tone.

This time it wasn't a clone that was made from nanomachine, it seemed it was the real Gear Leader.

Lux who saw that silently dispelled Wyvern's armor and switched to Bahamut.

「Hou? What are you planning wearing armor before the trial?」

「Because I don't know what will happen.」

Lux responded avoidantly to the high-handed words of Singlen.

Arshalia's words were continuing even then.

「Why were trials given repeatedly until this point? That is because the person who obtains Avalon will obtain the power to overturn and rule this world. Therefore, the number of people who know about the true nature of Avalon has to be very few. Well then from here, I will prepare the last trial.」

—*VVRN!*

Right after her voice, the surrounding mechanical pillars were squirming and pulling back.

The moment a spacious space was created, Lux turned around while slashing at the same time.

—*GIIN!*

High-pitched sound of clashing swords resounded. Sparks scattered fiercely before his eyes.

Lux's great sword and Singlen's Blade crossed each other. They were trembling while the equilibrium of strength was maintained.

「—What are you doing chore boy? Are you planning to betray us and the world alliance after this far?」

Singlen asked with a haughty grin.

Lux sharply narrowed his eyes and glared back at the enemy before him.

「Don't play stupid. How dare you harmed Airi and the Triad.」

Lux poured even more strength and pushed back the Blade.

Singlen shifted his blade and parried it, then he leaped back and took distance.

The Dragon Voice that came from Lolotte just now included image recording

and information report.

Singlen instructed Zweigbergk to capture Airi as hostage.

And also how in order to protect Airi, the Triad were seriously injured.

Therefore before Lux would perform the last trial, he took the first move to start the fight.

「You are an impulsive man like usual. I didn't particularly attempt to kidnap your little sister, those girls only met painful experience because they were resisting.」

「Enough with the nonsense!」

The control room of the central area where countless devices were squirming.

Inside the space where gears were moving and pipes were running to everywhere, Lux flew along with Bahamut.

With an immeasurably powerful enemy like Singlen as the enemy, he had no definite prospect of victory.

Even so, he couldn't complain about such thing.

It was great that they had reached until the central, but if he didn't stop this man here, then everything would be controlled by him.

「Kukuku..... People who originally should join hand together are tricking each other and laying trap. It's exactly like repeating back the history. Not a single thing has changed since my time.」

Singlen unleashed the tuning toward Lux who was charging at him.

The countless frames of light filled with character string and graphic floated around Leviathan, beautifully illuminating the deep blue armor.

Singlen's secret technique that made use of Drag-Ride's system—Senjin.

Singlen showed the stance of using that, but Lux unhesitatingly brandished his Blade.

「Is your sight blinded by rage? —Senjin – Ruten.」

Lux's slash that was aimed toward the shoulder was deflected by the parry of

an instantly deployed barrier.

The moment the slash would hit, a force field was formed to deflect it from right to left.

The barrier was deployed by matching the flow of Lux's slash without even an inch of deviation, so that the attack was stopped and averted.

But, Lux's slash only slightly scratched the barrier and hit the armor of Leviathan.

「——」

Singlen's parry was done with perfect timing.

However, the result was different from the previous fight when they used Wyvern and Drake.

「What's wrong? There is no need to go easy on me!」

Lux was provoking unusually vigorously at the enemy before him.

In contrast Singlen was blinking in wonder, but he soon put up his usual fearless smile.

「Ha-ha-ha. I see, so it's like that. It's a shallow thinking but looks like you have been wracking your brain huh. It seems you have been looking forward to a rematch with me.」

「.....」

Lux was silent toward Singlen's loud laughter.

Although it was only slightly, but the Senjin of that Singlen was broken through and the attack hit.

Lux pretended to be calm so that the trick wouldn't be understood.

But, his plan was already seen through with a glance.

「You used Bahamut's special armament Linker Pulse huh. You made me to be wary of your three hidden techniques and Divine Raiment, while launching surprise attack using your built-in special armament.」

「—!?」

It was bull's eye.

Singlen's Senjin – Ruten freely used parry by instantly deploying barrier, a technique that performed evasion and throwing the enemy off balance, but if he made a blunder with the technique, it would also expose weak point and opening that was just as large.

In matter of speed, Lux's hidden technique, Quick Draw would be effective. But Singlen would surely match the timing perfectly even against that.

Then, using the built-in Linker Pulse that the enemy usually wasn't conscious against, Lux moved his Drag-Ride to slightly shift the timing of his slash. If it went well the attack would hit, that was his calculation.

He deliberately provoked Singlen was to make him had misapprehension that the attack hit simply because of the difference in skill so that he could keep hiding the trick, but Singlen easily saw through it.

(Dear god. As I thought, this man isn't normal in regard to Drag-Ride battle.....!)

The trick of bypassing the defense was exposed, but Lux was still maintaining the advantage.

After all even if the trick was exposed, it didn't mean that Singlen would be able to block all his attacks.

「—Senjin – Gouka」

The moment Lux split his focus to his pondering, Leviathan charged with a fierce speed and approached from the front.

Its Blade was swung down with a sharp trajectory. Bahamut reflexively blocked it with its great sword.

But, the energy that was concentrated to one point exhibited a destructive power that couldn't be fully neutralized. Crack entered the special armament.

「Kuh.....aah!」

Lux barely pulled back his blade and parried the enemy's slash.

「I see, so you also used Linker Pulse in defense to shift the point of contact.

You are looking down on me, thinking that such petty trick will work against this me.」

「—Why!? Why are you all acting like this!?!」

「What?」

When Lux noticed, he was yelling that.

It wasn't a tactic or a restraint to make Singlen stopped attacking further.

Because Lux recognized this man's strength and talent more than anyone, Lux's own heart yelled so.

「It was the same five years ago. After forming a plan to make the country peaceful, Fugil turned traitor at the moment it was realized. Aren't we fighting for the sake of saving this world!?!」

Fugil too, he gave various knowledge to Lux for the sake of the revolution, helping him to learn to pilot Drag-Ride.

Singlen too, although his position was different as the representative of his country, he should be standing here as one of the Seven Dragon Paladins.

And yet why, they were doing something like this?

Lux couldn't comprehend their egoistic action.

「You already possess enough strength and status! Just what are you wishing for even more than that!?!」

「Fuh.....hahahaha!」

Lux's choked out an angry yell, however Singlen responded with an inappropriate laughter.

「What is funny?」

「That's a great way to pour cold water on a fight. Who can hold back from laughing after hearing that? Weren't you a prince even if just as a lowly one? Someone who had been involved with the pivot of the country, can really ask what more anyone could wish for?」

「What, do you mean?」

Singlen twirled his Blade and stabbed it into the ground.

He then continued to talk as though to say that it was the signal of the battle's pause.

「Very well. Originally I had no intention of talking this far with a fool, but in deference only to your talent in fighting, I'll especially teach you. After all it's also not something that you are wholly unrelated with.」

Lux didn't let his guard down while lending his ear to Singlen's words.

「The country I originated from, Blackend Kingdom was once dyed with corruption. It was already like that far before Ruins appeared in various places of the world and Drag-Ride was brought out. At that time I was still a brat, but I could change such situation anytime. After all I had the ability and also quite the pedigree from birth. Just like you in the past.」

「.....」

「But I didn't do anything. I had no interest for it. I was unable to find something worthy that could motivate this me to bother to change. Frankly speaking, it was just a trite reason. I was disgusted by the world. Whether it was toward the imbecile people in authority who were pleased with their monopoly of power, and also toward the lazy and incompetent foolish mass who wouldn't stand and oppose such bunch.」

「Is that you unjustified resentment and excuse talking after getting banished from your position as general after that?」

「Do you think so? At that time I was banished. On purpose that is.」

Singlen laughed down what Lux pointed out.

Singlen suppressed the rebellion within the country, exterminated Abyss, and managed the military, but he was expelled from the position of general because of his style that was too atrocious.

The king who feared Singlen's strength deliberately gave him bad treatment to distant him from authority. Singlen harbored dissatisfaction toward that. That was the rumor that Lux heard.

「At that time, it was easy even if I want to mow down the royalties and then

take the reign. But you see, I didn't even want to touch that kind of power struggle. It was trivial and worthless thing. I thought they can just do as they please by themselves.」

「Then, why—」

「Do you want to hear about how I secretly arranged so that Blackend Kingdom's army was destroyed once?」

「—!?」

That was one of the rumors out there.

The wearing down of Blackend Kingdom's war potential by Nocturnal's appearance and calamity.

The king lost his knight order and called Singlen back at that time. There was a rumor, could it be that even such happening was nothing more than this man's scheme?

This man was saying that it was the truth.

「It's a simple story. There is no end to human's greed and foolishness. Nothing is uglier in this world than animal with only shallow cunningness. After I retired, I was staying quiet without even getting involved with the Ruin. But, the hangers-on of the royal family who feared my strength even then, they tried to kill me in their desire for achievement.」

「—!?」

「The kingdom's soldiers who were dressed as bandit descended on the village at the remote region where I retired to. My blind big sister was killed when she refused to become hostage. That was after she got wretchedly tortured.」

A smile was tugged on the face of Singlen who was talking indifferently.

From that expression, delight from talking about human's brutality could even be peeked.

「Such thing, there is no way.....」

—'Impossible.' Lux couldn't assert that.

No, for Lux who had seen the other side of the old empire, he could vividly

imagine such scene.

People who considered themselves as someone with special position and looked down on others possessed cruelty to a terrifying degree.

It was as though they didn't feel pain at all in their heart no matter what kind of inhumane act they performed.

「I didn't feel sad even at my sister's death. In the first place I didn't have anything like affection toward family. But, they pushed their luck too far. They didn't even notice that I deliberately overlook them and grew impudent without end. No matter how insignificant, it was still my possession that those guys laid their hand on and trampled with muddy shoes.」

Singlen's jet black eye that wasn't covered by eye patch gleamed fiercely and he laughed.

「I noticed my own blunder. In this world, low-lives that surpassed even my imagination are existing as though it's only natural. If trash isn't incinerated, it will scatter stench and harmful bug around that will fly even until before my eyes.」

「.....」

Lux lost his mother and then he focused on reforming the old empire.

If he was to lose Airi or Philuffy through that?

Revenge—though surely Singlen had no such thought motivating him.

「It's intolerable. The ugliness of human's existence, the bottomless malice, they made me who was originally unconcerned to be unable to stay as spectator. In order to clean up harmful bug like them, this me has to swing the hatchet personally. That's all there is to it. At that time I met that Fugil and obtained even more power, and then—」

Singlen loudly recited at the top of his voice and pulled out the stabbed Blade.

「Therefore, Lux Arcadia who is asking for cooperation. We the supreme Drag-Knights exist for the sake of ruling as the pivot of the new world.」

「——」

「You are also unhappy with the way your country is the same like me right? Remaking the world into one where there will be no irrationality by the fool..... That can be realized if we obtain Avalon here.」

Most likely this was Singlen's last invitation.

Even so, Lux was unable to nod.

「I cannot say that your thinking is completely wrong.」

No—even Lux himself felt some parts that he could sympathize with in Singlen's story.

Even if someone gave an advice through the legitimate channel, the old empire would ignore it and even betrayed them.

What was important to him was taken away, he was hurt, and even now the scar was still remaining.

Lux looked back at the fate surrounding him until now and he suddenly thought.

Would it be better if he possessed a heartless resolve like this man from the start?

「—But, I cannot think that a world created like that is correct. You who had something taken away from you only became unable to see it!」

He pursued his own path without hesitation.

If that was one kind of justice, then searching for a method of solving problem that everyone wished for was also one kind of righteousness.

「Just like how an unreasonable fate was forced on you by them and you rebelled, if you do that then a new distortion would be created all over again.」

「So that won't happen, a power that cannot be overturned for eternity is necessary. That's the true power hidden in this Avalon.」

Singlen quietly glared authoritatively. Lux took a deep breath.

「It will be overturned, Singlen. After all it's just as you said, history will repeat itself. Even the Lord who created this Avalon, weren't they torn down from their position?」

「Then I will crushingly defeat any such thing no matter how many times. The unenlightened rebels who will disturb my control, I will exterminate them with my own hand thoroughly leaving not a single one, as many times as necessary.」

「—!?」

Water gathered around Singlen when Lux noticed, and the air was drying.

Leviathan's special armament, Ballast.

The conversation between Lux and Singlen until now was used for buying time.

But, perhaps because there was no source of water inside this room, the amount of water gathered was still few.

If it was like that, then the water couldn't be used freely for offense and defense.

The water would increase as time passed until it become unmanageable for Lux.

The strongest style that combined the control of water using Divine Raiment and battle technique of tuning.

The technique called Shin Senjin that defeated Yoruka would be used.

「It can't be helped. I will make a little bit of compromise. If I make you unable to move here and bring your little sister here, you too will surely change your tune.」

「——」

The instant Lux heard that, Lux exploded into motion and flew forward. He brandished his great sword and slashed at Singlen.

But, Singlen too skillfully manipulated his large sized Blade and blocked it.

「What are you doing attacking without any planning like that? Do you think that it would be an even fight if you attack before I could use my Divine Raiment?」

Singlen showed a high-handed grin while parrying Lux's consecutive attacks with only sword handling.

Perhaps because Singlen was thinking that if he used Senjin, the contact point would be shifted by Linker Pulse, he didn't use tuning.

In that case, it would be the turn for Lux's three hidden techniques and Divine Raiment, but as expected the opponent was also on guard against those.

(—There is no time. If he gathered enough water for both offense and defense, my defeat will be set in stone!)

The control room that was covered with metallic wall.

Singlen displayed that he was preparing using Ballast, inviting Lux to attack while he focused on defense.

If a few more minutes passed, the flow of victory would greatly tilt toward Singlen.

Lux who was originally powerful in defense while waiting for a chance to launch his Quick Shot, was forced to perform reckless offense by Singlen's tactic.

This very moment when that tactic was established was a great chance.

「What's the matter chore boy? Your options are vanishing with every second that passed you know?」

「Then, try receiving this!」

Lux launched a feint of downward swing, while he touched Bahamut's Sword Device and unleashed his hidden technique.

The conforming of body control operation and mind control operation—the slash of Quick Draw flashed.

Because the preliminary motion of touching the Sword Device was necessary, that slash was predicted.

But, Bahamut let go of the handle of the great sword its armored arm was holding, in exchange the Dagger that was drawn out was thrown like an arrow.

「.....-!？」

Dagger throwing through Quick Draw.

It was an attack that should take the enemy by surprise, but because its

power was low, the Dagger was deflected by the barrier and armor.

The opponent flinched from the negligible scratch that was carved, but that was all.

「Are you intending to outwit me by relying on cheap trick? What meaning is there in such act?」

Singlen turned a gaze that was mixed with exasperation. Lux winced.

Certainly, the effect was small even when he took the opponent by surprise using an attack that only had speed behind it.

If he could use Over Limit at least then it would become a more even match, but there was no use even if he lamented such thing.

(There is no choice but to do this with what weapon I have at hand!)

Singlen's defense was extremely solid.

The armor and barrier of Leviathan itself too when it was a land battle type Divine Drag-Ride.

And also the defense method using Senjin that he mastered.

But, exactly because the enemy was in overwhelming advantage that there was also an opening.

Lux lifted his last Dagger as though to show it and then threw it to Singlen.

「Have you stopped playing around? The sin of making me spend my time in something worthless is heavy you know?」

「I have no interest in amusing myself in battle! —Reload on Fire!」

Instantly, Lux took distance and activated Reload on Fire.

The first five seconds—the user's own time would be decelerated, then at the next five seconds the time would be accelerated by several times over. That was Bahamut's Divine Raiment.

Because it would cause the user to expose a defenseless state at the beginning, it couldn't be used well without first perfectly seeing through the enemy's preliminary motion when attacking.

Lux hadn't perfectly grasped Singlen's movement.

Even so, he judged that it would be safe if it was in the current chance.

「What a piddling man. So your vain struggle until now is just laying groundwork.」

In Drag-Ride battle, it was unexpectedly difficult to shift from defense to offense.

Of course, Drag-Knight in Lux or Singlen's level it was something easy, but there was problem of consciousness.

It would be easy if the awareness of counterattacking after defending form attack was instilled into the mind, but the initial movement would be dull when attacking from the stance of sticking exclusively to defense.

The reason was, because the will to attack itself hadn't been put in order.

No matter how fast one's reflex was and how expert one's skill was, to switch one's mindset from defense to offense and then realizing it into action would need a few seconds at minimum.

Outwitting the enemy and activating Reload on Fire first was originally an impossible strategy, but if it succeeded he would be able to grasp victory in the latter five seconds.

But, right after Lux's surprise attack that should have taken the opponent completely by surprise, Singlen exploded into action and broke into a run.

「—!？」

It didn't even take one second for Singlen's consciousness to react from its petrified state.

The wheels of the armored legs rotated in high speed and he reached the maximum speed in the blink of eye.

He brandished his Blade. It would take one more second for the slash with the momentum of the rush behind it to reach Lux.

The distance of 20 m between them vanished in a moment and Singlen assaulted with the fastest rush.

(No way, impossible!?)

There was no way Singlen had predicted the Reload on Fire that Lux suddenly activated.

And yet, he had immediately read Lux's intention and went into offense.

It was a terrifying mental ability to make instantaneous decision and executed it.

Even though Lux had continuously made that much preparation to paralyze his thought, and yet...

「How many times of compression strengthening that is? After you receive my slash, how fast you are going to fly away? I have to hold back so to not kill you after all.」

The moment the slash hit, Singlen spoke with a mocking smile. When one got hit by powerful attack at the period of the first five seconds of Reload on Fire, the target would be soaked by several times the damage at the next five seconds.

There was even a possibility that the armor of Bahamut that was losing control would be smashed to pieces.

Therefore Singlen raised a voice of consideration, but Leviathan's Blade was easily deflected by Lux's great sword.

「—!?!」

The tip that was clad in energy was tilted diagonally and the moment the two swords crossed it was parried.

Singlen whose attack was blocked and lost balance turned around with a shocked expression.

No matter how much of a master Lux was in seeing through his enemy's movement, he should be unable to parry the attack just now when his movement was reduced until a mere fragments.

Furthermore, Lux's sword wasn't readied beforehand on the trajectory of Singlen's attack, it obviously moved to defend. That was to say—.

「You didn't accelerate time using Reload on Fire from the start, you were just luring me!?!」

「—HAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!」

Lux had no leeway to answer that question.

The Reload on Fire that he activated hastily was the first trap to make the opponent thought he was trying to make a surprise attack.

The true trap that was hidden by it splendidly caught Singlen.

If he lost this chance of a lifetime, victory wouldn't come for the second time.

A returning slash flashed horizontally in full strength.

However, in front of the attack that should have caught the enemy in the unguarded moment, a barrier was instantly deployed.

「—Senjin – Ruten」

「-.....!?!」

Due to the instant activation of barrier force field just before the attack hit using the application of tuning, the opponent's attack was parried by the advanced battle technique.

Singlen's reserve strength that allowed him to react even when he was caught within the second trap.

Furthermore, even the size of the barrier was greatly widened in order to suppress the deviation of the contact point by Linker Pulse to the minimum.

「Just as I thought. I knew—that you would come like that!」

「What.....!?!」

Right after that, Singlen who was wearing Leviathan went off balance and his body floated up.

The full power attack that aimed at the defenseless torso mercilessly landed on the enemy.

「.....Gu, a!」

The sword was mostly not coated with energy, it was an attack that only

prioritized hitting the enemy.

Even so the attack had weight and speed behind it. It transmitted enough power into the opponent.

「Haa, haa..... Haa.....-!」

Lux who was displaying absurd power of concentration saw off Singlen who was blown away until the wall behind while gasping for breath.

Looking back now that it had ended, it was an exchange that lasted only for an instant.

Several deep tactics were exchanged within that moment.

It barely made it in time.

What Lux compressed and strengthened using Reload on Fire was the force field of Linker Pulse. The weak power that could only somewhat change an object's trajectory was boosted up until several times and then activated.

That was the third trap that Lux laid out.

The first trap was giving the hint of time deceleration by the activation of Reload on Fire previously, inviting Singlen to attack. The second trap was when Lux moved normally when the enemy thought that his movement speed was reduced.

And then when Linker Pulse was strengthened by several times, he disturbed the opponent's stance and slashed.

The edge of the blade that was covered up with tactics splendidly cut through the solid bastion of the Blue Tyrant.

「Singlen! This is your loss! I'll receive the last trial and wait for Aeryl! You just wait there quietly!」

Lux raised his voice to hold Singlen in check while keeping his alert stance.

Even Singlen would surely become unable to fight after getting direct hit of a great sword in his defenseless moment.

Leviathan's armor wasn't that damaged, but the Blade that directly hit to his body even through the armor was—.

「—!？」

But, recalling the story that he heard from Yoruka, Lux drove his Bahamut forward.

Singlen had Baptism performed on half his body. Even if he died, he would be resurrected once.

Before that effect could be displayed, he had to completely destroy Leviathan.

But, the water stream that was like a waterfall standing in his way caused Lux to feel a strange discomfort and hair-raising sensation.

「-.....damn it!？」

「Fu, kukukuku.....that was close, really close. So it finally made it in time.」

Looking closer, Singlen's surrounding was filled with enough amount of water.

The water content in the air was gathered thoroughly from the ventilation and the amount continued to increase until this much.

But, Singlen pressed his hand on his side and blood leaked out from his mouth.

Most likely several of his ribs were broken, and his internal organs were also injured.

If he was injured that much, then he would be able to keep the advantage even if Singlen now had finished his preparation.

『Informing the two people here. Because access to central hasn't been carried out pass a certain time, the two of you will be removed forcefully from here in five more minutes.』

「—!？」

The Automata, Arshalia who was watching the battle of Lux and Singlen suddenly said such thing.

Lux thought that once he entered Avalon, receiving the third trial was a definite matter, but it seemed there was a time restriction.

In that case, this wasn't the time to fight among themselves.

Even though they finally got a step ahead of Listelka's group and arrived at the central first, at this rate they would helplessly get chased outside.

They should stop the futile fight right away and get outside.

Lux thought like that, but when he was about to speak peacefully,

「Kukuku..... That's how it is, chore boy.」

Singlen who heard that declared with his single eye gleaming fiercely.

「That useless doll said, finish it within five minutes. It seems that is its wish.」

「.....」

Seeing Singlen's arrogant smile that daunted other people, Lux guessed it.

He wouldn't listen to persuasion.

The reason was, because Singlen was taking action based on his own unshakable belief.

Then Lux too had no other choice but clashed his own answer and took the victory.

He would bring down Singlen within five minutes, then accepted Arshalia's trial and connected to the central.

He would stop the Sacred Eclipse, grasped the situation, and then, if it was possible he wanted to heal Philuffy right away.

He wouldn't think like that time any—.

「-.....!？」

At that time when Lux suddenly thought of his childhood friend, he felt a strange discomfort and hair-raising sensation.

The scene of five years ago instantly surfaced at the back of his mind. His consciousness was swallowed.

—

Part 11

「Oi, just what the hell is going on with this situation huh?」

While Listelka and Fugil were in a standoff against Seven Dragon Paladins led by Magialca, Hayes suddenly appeared. Her existence caused everyone to lose their words.

It was because Hayes who was already dying being revived like this, furthermore her eyes were dyed jet black, and eerie aura and miasma were overflowing from her body.

And yet, the girl herself was calm as though that gruff personality of her had vanished somewhere.

「Hayes, just now, what did you say—」

「I said, leave from this place, are you deaf Onee-sama? I'll be compassionate seeing that you are my former blood relative, but I'm not so kind I'll repeat myself for the third time yeah.」

Her wicked personality was hidden from view, but her poisonous tongue was still the same.

Listelka who saw that frowned in bafflement, but she immediately formed a graceful smile.

「Hayes. I'm surprised that you are alive, but I'm really happy. Aeri has already betrayed me. It was really painful.」

She spoke admonishingly with her usual elegant bearing.

Aeri who was insinuated stayed quiet, silently watching the event progression.

「But, with your body you won't hold out for long. Please hide in a safe place for the remainder of this battle, and see with your own eyes how I obtain

Avalon.」

Listelka's tone was mixed with concern for Hayes who was already beyond hope.

But, Hayes curtly whistled.

「—Above!」

Magialca wearing EX Drake raised her voice. Angel type Abysses descended from the sky.

Greifer and Mel immediately moved to intercept, but several among them descended to where Hayes was, and the moment they touched her, they became faint light and vanished.

It was as though they melted and directly fused inside Hayes.

「What's that.....!? What's going ooon.....?」

「Was those Abysses illusion? —No. It's simply that there is an existence in front of us that can control and absorb Abyss.」

Rosa frowned slightly, while Soffice muttered in bafflement.

At the end the Lord girl recapped that phenomenon into one piece.

「Are you, Sacred Eclipse?」

Aeril glared forward. Hayes tilted her head toward those words and smiled.

「As expected from the Onee-sama who was sneakily moving behind the scene, you're a sharp one. But that's not completely right. You aren't my big sister or anything anymore. After all I have completely transcended the body of human.」

「.....Sacred Eclipse? She isn't the real Hayes, but only a counterfeit?」

When Listelka made a questioning gaze, Hayes laughed loudly and answered instantly.

「I'm the real thing. Rather than that you guys are really easygoing huh. Even though that fake prince is already in front of the central of Avalon—」

「—!? As I thought, Lux-kun and Singlen is」

「Fugil, is Avalon all right?」

Aeril and Listelka each spoke anxiously, but Hayes who saw that let slipped a sigh.

「You two are wondering whether he would connect to central first? It's impossible you know, you all ignoramus. After all, it's only me who hold the qualification for that. With me who am fused with Sacred Eclipse staying here, there is no way he can be given the trial right?」

「.....!?」

In front of everyone who spontaneously turned speechless, several more Angels descended and Hayes absorbed them.

Then from her fingertips, seven colored liquid—Elixir was slightly dripping.

「Kukuku.....Angel condense the life energy of human that Abysses gathered up and brought it to this me. You guys also noticed right? Just why was Abyss created.」

The refined secret medicine Elixir from Hayes who was fused with Sacred Eclipse.

A shudder ran through the expression of Aeril who saw that.

「Then don't tell me, Abyss ate people, in order to refine Elixir—」

「It's raw material gathering. The Lords in the past, in order to sublimate themselves to become even more superior existence using the secret medicine called Elixir, they gathered the life of the lower classes in the name of political purge.」

「——」

The words that Hayes spat out casually caused both camps to become speechless.

Magialca was the only one who spoke out with only a frown on her face.

「That's really an extreme elitism there. Normal people of authority will extort manual labor and riches from the populace, but the ancestor of the Lord actually began to steal even the life of their people huh. In addition, the life of

just animal wasn't enough it seems.」

「As expected from the multi-millionaire-sama, you really get it. Human rather than animal, close relative rather than people of different race—Elixir will have higher effect if the raw material comes from organism that is closer to the user. Arcadia clan that became the Lord thrived, then they were split into a part that was the chosen class, and the masses that supported them. They used the Elixir that was exploited from the lowborn to strengthen their body in the attempt to obtain eternal life and indestructible strength.」

「.....What family of traitor! WE treated Lux-kun and others like betrayer, even though the cause of everything was our fault, because of the Lord's arrogance!」

Aeril who knew the truth couldn't endure it and raised her voice.

But, even after recognizing the truth, Hayes only laughed that down.

「Arrogance? This is why Onee-sama is off. Wasn't it really great, people who was born with outstanding intellect became the statesman, while the rabbles obeyed and offered all they had. What's wrong with that? The whole clan was saved and stood at the top of the world because of us the imperial family.」

「It resulted in our current situation in the end isn't it!? We must not repeat the same mistake again. For that too, the battle has to be ended here—」

Aeril objected while also gripping tightly the special armament whip that Zahhak possessed.

Hayes didn't back down and responded to that with a composed smile.

「You want to have a go, against this me who has transformed into Sacred Eclipse itself? That's fine, I'll play with you. It'll be good to kill time until that fake prince get out of the central.」

Hayes threw away her robe and yelled.

Half of that body that was clad with only pilot suit was already dyed jet black.

「.....Hayes!? You are—」

「Come at me Onee-sama. You too are tired of sneakily plotting behind the scene right? You should have a taste of the terror of battlefield occasionally. Together with that bunch there!」

「——」

Hayes roared. The air shook fiercely.

Lisha and others who were observing the situation from the cover of a building heard that and showed themselves.

「So we were found huh..... Well, we didn't intend to profit from other people's fight anyway.」

「Lisha-san!? Also everyone too!」

Aeril gasped and raised her voice in surprise.

The second team that was formed with Syvalles members as the core.

The remaining members after Airi and the Triad separated from them came rushing here.

Although because Celis was injured, she wasn't here.

「Where is that captain-sama I wonder? I don't think she is the type who will easily die in battle though.」

Rosa who had connection with Celis asked. Lisha immediately told her the answer.

「No worry. She is only resting. She was just getting too spirited in order to defeat that cold blooded maid.」

「Mishis was? Impossible, there is no way she can be defeated by the like of Drag-Knights in this era——」

Listelka reflexively slipped out a snicker.

「Most likely you all were just running away from facing her in battle, leaving behind that aide of Lux called Celis to die.」

「No——it was your maid who retreated. It was a narrow victory, but it doesn't change the fact that it was our win. Your servant wasn't so soft that she would let us escape easily.」

「.....」

Additionally, Yoruka also wasn't there.

Because she too was completely exhausted from the intense battle the other day, she was unable to display even half her true strength in the battle against Mishis.

And so, in order to protect Airi and the Triad who were isolated, she brought the fainted Celis with her and retreated.

After that, several angel type Abysses were heading toward their direction, but if it was Yoruka, surely she would be able to overcome them while protecting the five.

Lisha, Krulcifer, and Philuffy were also nearly at their limit, but there was no way they could relax at this stage.

「Is that so..... Well, it's fine. It will be punishment for her when she return.」

Listelka muttered along with a sigh, then her red eye that received Baptism silently shined.

When she used the power to intervene with Avalon's system, her figure vanished.

「Where are you planning to go!? You are going to run when the central is right in front of you, first princess!」

「Yes, I will hide. After all Fugil won't be able to fight freely while protecting me.」

Listelka didn't respond to Lisha's provocation and spoke casually.

「Hayes, I will ascertain your battle with my own eyes. And then, the last contract by Sacred Eclipse that lost its ego will come to me. During that time, the battle at the central will surely be settled too.」

「Lux-kun..... Stay safe.」

With Listelka's words, Aeril reconfirmed the situation at the central part.

If the connection with central wasn't performed, the people inside the room would be teleported outside in ten minutes.

If it was now when Hayes was fused with Sacred Eclipse, there was no worry of getting connected to the central.

This bizarre situation occurred from several irregularities piling up on each other, but the answer was simple.

After defeating Sacred Eclipse that is possessing that Hayes and tearing it off from her, we will enter into the control room with Aeryl. That will be our objective.] (Magialca) 「.....」

Fugil kept a calm smile on his face while flying backward to take distance from Hayes.

It seemed he had no intention to attack proactively.

「Then, you three from Syvalles, which one who you will fight? We don't mind to face either one you know?」

「You have no intention to split at least half our force for them? We are still mostly uninjured here.」

The youngest Mel muttered in exasperation, but Magialca deepened her wicked smile and responded.

「It'll be too careless to split up evenly. If one of them is defeated earlier, that side will be able to give backup after that.」

「Either way is fine! Let's do this right away!」

Lisha yelled while pursuing to the place where Listelka vanished.

Then, Fugil quickly intercepted her with Bahamut.

All ten Legions that were fired from Tiamat were easily deflected by Fugil with his great sword.

The sword that was held in front of him was almost unmoving, deflecting the attack with the minimum movement.

「Chih, his expression didn't even change at all. Then—how about this!」

Lisha directed the aim of her main cannon Seven Heads to the area slightly above Fugil's head and sent her Legion out once more.

Four projectiles came simultaneously from left and right in a pincer attack.

The moment Fugil deflected those with his Blade, two additional Legion flying low on the ground thrust up toward him.

It was a coordination attack of Legion that she also used when fighting Lux for the first time, an attempt to push up the enemy into the firing trajectory of the cannon.

However, the attack that should have captured the target with certainty was diverted to just barely miss Fugil.

「.....!? Trajectory diversion using Linker Pulse!? That guy, he is masterfully using Bahamut just like Lux?」

「Even though you said that either one is fine just now, you aimed at Fugil without hesitation. Is there a meaning in it I wonder?」

Krulcifer backed up Lisha using Freezing Cannon while cracking jokes nearby.

Even the shot that was fired almost at the same time with the aiming was blocked by throwing Dagger at it this time.

「Because he is, using Bahamut like Lu-chan?」

Philuffy too drove her Typhon and circled behind Fugil.

In order to prevent the counter Quick Shot from Reload on Fire, she fired Pile Anchor to entangle the opponent's weapon.

「There's that too!」

Lisha replied while holding Fugil in check using Legion once more.

Bahamut that was piloted with the same skill level or even more than Lux was certainly troublesome, but to look at it from another way, Lisha and others were already very familiar with its use.

If it was the engineer Lisha who was always maintaining Drag-Ride for Lux's sake then it was even truer.

「But, I had met with this guy once in the past! I also have a lot of things I want to ask! As the princess of the new kingdom! And then—」

「As Lux-kun's comrade, right?」

The members of Syvalles basically didn't know what kind of relationship Lux and Fugil had.

However, at the time when the revolution was going to succeed, he betrayed

Lux.

They only heard how Fugil slaughtered the imperial family as well as the people who were complicit with the old empire.

They also knew how it ate at Lux's heart all this time when he was trying to accomplish the revolution without shedding blood as much as possible.

There was a wall between Lux and the girls even after they became close was most likely there was a thorn called Fugil in his heart.

In other words, Lisha had an objective of ferreting information and capability of the existence that was the arch-enemy of Lux through this fight.

「If this problem is resolved, then our path of love will also be cleared, isn't that right?」

「.....Buh!?!」

The words that Krulcifer smoothly muttered caused Lisha to spontaneously make a spit take.

「You are really..... I thought you won't crack joke at this kind of pressing situation but—」

Certainly Lisha was also thinking the same thing, but she didn't say it out loud because she thought it was imprudent.

If they defeated Fugil and Lux's regret was erased, Lux too wouldn't be at a loss of his own path.

He would also take off the collar of criminal, and he surely would be able to associate with others with the premise of marriage.

But, Krulcifer piloted her Drag-Ride with a serious expression even though she was still keeping her smile.

「My, for me it's a serious problem. It's something worthy for me to stake my life for. Rather than something like for the sake of the world, this matter is far more motivating right?」

「.....」

Even Lisha was astonished and her mouth stayed open wide for a moment.

But, her mouth soon warped into a grin and she nodded with her eyes shining confidently.

「—You're right. That's also true.」

A sense of mission as a princess.

It was something selfish compared to things like Lisha's own sense of justice, but certainly strength was welling up even more inside herself from it.

「Because of you, I've got to wait for a long while until now! I'll vent this frustration to you, Aniue-dono!」
brother in law

Lisha yelled. At the same time Tiamat's Divine Raiment activated.

Fugil who until now was mostly floating still in the air flew to the side seeing that.

「Finally you moved! There!」

Krulcifer who activated the future prediction of Fafnir fixed her aim in a flash.

The normal bullet that was the condensation of energy like an arrow.

The aim was the hip area of Fugil who was wearing armor, the Sword Device that was within the sheath.

According to Aeryl's information, the outside appearance and function were exactly like Bahamut, but originally it was a part of the Divine Drag-Ride called Uroboros, a special armament with the name of 《Infinity》.

It could transform to all Divine Drag-Ride.

Looking just from that, it was a weapon with terrifying function, but if they fought in the way that matched each form then there would be a mean of survival for them.

And then, the Sword Device at the waist was behind a barrier and it was hard to aim at, but with Krulcifer's precise sniping that could even pass through the eye of needle and her future prediction, it was possible to hit it.

Pashi-!

Just like in the future prediction, Krulcifer's shot sent the Sword Device flying.

The Sword Device that was also the control stick for mind control operation was taken away. If it was destroyed or frozen, the control of Drag-Ride would be reduced by half after that.

「Philuffy! Your turn!」

Krulcifer deliberately called out was to divert Fugil's focus to that way.

Krulcifer herself also didn't pause and fired her freezing bullet toward the sword dancing in the air.

But, the trajectory of the Sword Device suddenly changed. It was pulled back toward Fugil.

「-.....!?」

Fugil quickly picked up the Sword Device with his empty hand, next he swept away Pile Anchor with his great sword.

「You can only read the future that far? Stop with the pointless attack. It has no meaning in a fight with me.」

Fugil spoke shortly with a composed expression.

「He pulled back the thrown Sword Device with Linker Pulse!? Did he predict our action already!?」

Lisha who saw that muttered in irritation. Krulcifer also continued after her.

「That's not all. If he had predicted it, then he should be able to counterattack easily too. Is he wary toward Fafnir's Divine Raiment and plan to focus on defense while waiting for us to get exhausted?」

Fugil was also simply dodging Philuffy's attack with the minimal movement. It was as though there was killing intent from his movement.

No, they couldn't even feel hostility from him.

『I think that's not it....., you know』

The reticent Philuffy talked to Lisha and Krulcifer using Dragon Voice with Fugil between them.

『What do you mean?』

Krulcifer asked back with a questioning face.

『I believe he isn't thinking to defeat us. Rather, he is paying attention to not harm us.』

「That's absurd! What does that guy gain from doing that!?!」

Lisha spontaneously yelled with her voice and denied that hypothesis.

But, Philuffy continued her words indifferently with composure to the end.

『Even though he deflected my Pile Anchors with his sword, they aren't damaged. Perhaps, Lisha-sama's too is also like that.』

「What!?!」

Lisha immediately used mind control operation to bring one of the Legion floating around her before her eyes.

Certainly, the weapon wasn't damaged.

If a weapon was deflected by a powerful person in Fugil's class with Blade that was clad in energy, not to mention some damage, it wouldn't be strange even if it got destroyed—.

Not just that, could it be he even had the leeway to be considerate so the Drag-Ride of Lisha and co wouldn't be worn out?

「Is he provoking us? That there is that much different in strength between us.....!」

「I cannot say that there is no possibility of that. But, if that's the case shouldn't he speak out to agitate us?」

Beside Lisha who was gritting her teeth in frustration, Krulcifer calmly pointed out.

However, Fugil's defense was really troublesome.

They didn't know what his true motive was, but their heart would break first if they were showed this much different in strength.

They were aware that he was a brilliant Drag-Knight, but the depth of his strength was far more bottomless than they imagined.

「Then, we've no choice but to go at full strength!」

With the opponent not attacking and going easy on them, they would harbor bewilderment to the fight itself.

Before their fighting spirit weakened, they had to roll up the opposition. That was Lisha's judgment.

They were at disadvantage in stamina but there was no other way.

Using the three Sword Devices she carried, she would equip even more Drag-Ride above the Drag-Ride she had worn, the Over Unit form, and with that she would decide the match in one go.

「Right. That's better rather than getting exhausted bit by bit from keep fighting like this.」

At the same time, Krulcifer also resolved herself and sorted her breathing along with her fighting spirit.

Fusing a part of the body with Drag-Ride, Full Connect.

The two who resolved themselves to use their trump card put their hand on their respective Sword Device. At that time, the figure of Fugil floating in the air vanished.

「—!?!」

Naturally, Lisha and Krulcifer hadn't let their guard down for even a moment.

They didn't let their eyes move from Fugil. Not just his Drag-Ride, they even paid attention to the subtle movement of his limbs.

And yet, his figure vanished suddenly like this. It was impossible.

But, when they noticed, Lisha and Krulcifer already had their Sword Device knocked off from their hand.

「Wh, at.....?」

「Just now, how—!?!」

「Stop it.」

「-.....!?!」

Lisha and Krulcifer turned around midair toward the voice that came from behind.

There, Fugil still wearing Bahamut was smiling.

「Just as you noticed, I have no intention to fight with you all. For now you can settle the battle with Sacred Eclipse and fulfill your own wish.」

「Kuh.....!」

Lisha and Krulcifer each flew low skimming above the ground and picked their Sword Device before sheathing it back into their sheath.

「What did you do to us!? Was that Uroboros's ability!?!」

Even though she was shaken, Lisha asked with enough fighting spirit in her voice.

But, that question was eluded by Fugil with his usual attitude.

「There is no meaning for you to hound me here. Right now your priority should be to tear off Hayes's personality from Sacred Eclipse and subdue it. That will also be for the sake of that foolish little brother. Am I wrong?」

An admonishing tone.

However Krulcifer glared at Fugil and objected.

「You are stronger than us, but are you unable to fight in long period? I wonder if that is why you are trying to befuddle us like this.」

「Stronger you say? From the start I have no intention to compete with you all in anything. What you all should do isn't this. Are you planning to get fixated in an existence that is not dangerous and nip victory in the bud by yourself?」

「Just answer one question! Why did you give me Tiamat five years ago!?!」

Lisha who stayed quiet suddenly asked as though to stir herself up into action.

She thought that he might completely dodge the question by pretending to forget or the like, but an answer unexpectedly came.

「Because that was exactly my duty.」

A smile that made a chill ran through the back of anyone who saw it.

Dark shadow covered Fugil's eyes and he talked.

「You were in the side of the old empire that ought to be destroyed. But, in reality you were just a victim. You were forcefully made to shoulder a negative fate, even your resolve to live while being covered in mud ended up in vain, even your path was going to be severed. That was why I granted you strength.」

「.....What are you saying? You want to say that you helped me because of a whim?」

「Don't make me repeat myself. There is no meaning for you all to fight me. Go stop that girl quickly. And then you better show me the answer. Who will be chosen by Sacred Eclipse, that choice of the world—」

「.....!？」

When Lisha readied her weapon in bewilderment, a strange sound rang out behind.

The countless angels scattered in this Arcadia Empire were swarming toward Hayes, and a flash surged.

—

Part 12

「Wha-!?!」

Lisha and others were sent flying from receiving a tremendous shockwave that shook the atmosphere.

Looking there, behind the five Seven Dragon Paladins who were in confrontation, a weapon with strange form appeared.

It didn't have normal bipedal shape. It had three front legs and two front legs like an animal.

The giant body that was like several houses combined together appeared in front of Hayes.

「What's that—. Divine Drag-Ride?」

Right after Krulcifer knitted her eyebrow, the magic circle on the weapon's stomach shined and the Seven Dragon Paladins beside it vanished.

It happened in a flash, leaving behind Aeryl who reacted by leaping back.

「—Wha-!?!」

The complexion of Lisha and others who saw that changed and they lost their presence of mind.

At the same time Hayes twirled and faced this way. She then sneered.

「Kukuku, don't be that shocked. This guy is a bit special Divine Drag-Ride you see. It's activated by its own autonomy, in exchange it procured energy from outside. Those Seven Dragon Paladins now become its fuel, inside this guy's stomach that is.」

Jaki-, Hayes gloated while her hands held the two Sword Devices hanging on her waist.

It seemed that in exchange of not wearing the Drag-Ride on one's own body,

the activation signal was given by mind control operation.

「Be careful! That is Fernyiges! The autonomous type Divine Drag-Ride that guard Avalon! Most likely Hayes right now has the qualification to obtain the central!」

Aeril who just barely escaped the danger approached Lisha and others in panic and called out to them.

Greifer, Mel, Rosa, Soffice, and Magialca were captured by the Divine Drag-Ride due to Fernyiges's surprise attack and they were turned into its fuel.

「If you got hit by the light that came out from that Drag-Ride's stomach, you will be carried inside and your consciousness taken away. And then your stamina and mental strength would be used as fuel to move Fernyiges. The people inside will be weakened until they die—」

「What did you say!?!」

When Lisha asked back in bewilderment, Aeril sighed quietly.

「I was also careless. When I read the book that was hidden in the Moon, there was a mention of it, but to think that Hayes can move it.....」

While talking, a question was coming and going inside Aeril's chest.

In the first place, what in the world was that?

Hayes himself should be dying already, was she just getting absorbed by Ragnarok Sacred Eclipse that would destroy the world?

Or else—.

「Hah..... Five more minutes until that fake prince is driven out from that control room. Until then I'll prepare his welcome party. By lining up your heads in front of him!」

「Kuh!」

Hayes's jet black eyes snapped open and she unleashed killing intent along with a roar.

She planned to fight without even wearing Drag-Ride with the Sword Devices she was holding along with Fernyiges.

「This is bad, this situation—」

Now that Seven Dragon Paladins were restrained, the remaining fighting force was only Lisha, Krulcifer, and Philuffy.

Even these three were wounded all over from the intense battle until now.

「Besides, right now Lux-kun is fighting Sir Singlen right?」

Krulcifer let out an uneasy mutter. Lisha also nodded in agreement.

Lux boasted unequaled winning percentage in battle between fellow Drag-Knights, but that Singlen was a cut above all the opponents until now.

He was even killed once before although it was from protecting Yoruka.

「So he is dueling that guy in the control room..... Five more minutes. Will he be alright?」

「—It will be fine, you know.」

「.....Eh?」

Philuffy who was quiet until now murmured. Lisha and Krulcifer both raised their voice.

Looking there, Philuffy took out a horn flute from her pocket and brought it onto her mouth.

「You....., don't tell me, you are going to do that? Turning into Abyss with that body is—」

Because the revived Ragnarok, Yggdrasil had died, it became possible for Philuffy too to transform by Abyssification.

The forbidden technique of growing the root of Yggdrasil from inside her body to crawl on her armor, turning it into B-blood Typhon.

Not just her physical ability, even her Drag-Ride aptitude and stamina would be increased, but the burden to the body couldn't be measured.

「Stop acting recklessly! That power isn't something to be used repeatedly!」

「She is right..... If you are injured, that's what will ruin Lux-kun for sure.」

Lisha and Krulcifer tried to stop her together, but Philuffy shook her head with

her usual blank look.

「It's alright. Because, I remember.」

「What.....?」

「Five years ago, when I was mostly died in Ries Island. And then, Sacred Eclipse was summoned. I remembered everything. Surely after this, the same thing like that time will occur.」

「What are you saying? The time when you died you said?」

Philuffy glanced at the bewildered Lisha and pulled out the Sword Device of Typhon.

She was expressionless and looking dazed like usual, but straightforward and strong light was residing inside her eyes.

「I won't die. Because I came until this far to help Lu-chan.」

The sound of horn flute was produced from Philuffy's mouth.

Right after that, Philuffy's eyes were dyed jet black and her pupils were tinged with golden light.

Seeing her resolve, Lisha and also Krulcifer held their breath.

「Lu-chan, won't die leaving us behind. At the very least, he had never fought even once with such intention. That's why, I'll also do the same.」

That's right.

Lux understood that there was nobody but him who could stop Singlen and accepted that role.

But, he didn't think to sacrifice himself or anything.

Till the end he was resolved to risk his life, in order to return to the side of everyone.

Then—.

「.....You're right. Surely it's like that.」

Krulcifer who saw that also pulled out her Sword Device in answer.

Connecting and assimilating a part of the Drag-Ride with the flesh body, Full

Connect.

She decided to make a bet using the sure kill form that could only be used by Key's Supervisor.

「Yeah. Then we're going to do this. Just like Celis and Yoruka, I too will wring out all my remaining strength!」

Lisha too also put her hand on Wyvern's Sword Device while still wearing Tiamat.

Beside Krulcifer who was executing Full Connect, she began her original technique Over Unit.

Part of general purpose Drag-Ride was equipped above the Drag-Ride that was already worn, increasing a part of the ability of the Drag-Ride drastically.

First Lisha equipped the flying type Wyvern Wing, hyper strengthening her mobility.

「Kukuku..... Are you bitches ready to be taught of your own powerlessness? I'm going to start now yeah?」

Hayes who was fused with Sacred Eclipse was also glaring with jet black eyes that were shining fierily.

Her whole body was dyed jet black, perhaps because of Elixir's influence. The human shaped monster flew up wearing atrocious smile.

—

Part 13

(This place, where is—?)

Inside a hazy consciousness that looked misty, Lux saw the continuation of the day of revolution in Arcadia Empire that he saw previously in dream.

He could see the scenery of Arcadia Empire clearly.

Sparks were whirling around the castle. Countless Drag-Knights were crossing swords with Bahamut in the night sky.

Even when dozen of Drag-Rides attacked simultaneously, using Quick Shot from Reload on Fire's time acceleration, they were struck down by the other side.

Lux was watching that overwhelming way of fighting from the ground.

He was wearing the same Bahamut while holding the fainted Airi in his arms. He was heading toward a monastery looking for shelter.

(—That's right. The day the revolution ended, I saw Fugil-niisan's way of fighting..... That was why I participated in the tournament for training to use Bahamut even better than before.)

Because he thought that he wouldn't be able to win against that man without doing that.

No, if he wasn't able to even come up to the fighting stage—.

But, a contradiction occurred when his thought reached that point.

(What am I saying!? This kind of scene isn't reality. It's the continuation of the dream I saw!)

The injection of Elixir through Baptism.

Because he received the trial in order to reach the central, Lux's consciousness was cloudy.

Because intense burden suddenly burdened his mind and body, his heart's old wound ached and he saw this kind of illusion.

But, after the Lux inside the dream entrusted Airi to a nun of the monastery and immediately returned to the castle, he finally talked.

「Fugil-niisan! Just what is going on!?!」

「Looks like you have left behind your little sister huh? Then you can continue fighting. Count Atismata has also died. Like that some deviation is generated in the history but, it's possible enough to revise it. You can ascend to the throne as the next king.」

「.....!?!」

Lux stared dumbfounded at the burning castle.

Behind Fugil who was wearing Bahamut, there was a silhouette of a Drag-Ride so huge it looked towering to the sky.

Silver Drag-Ride that stood out inside the darkness of night.

Divine mechanical circle was rotating on its back, illuminating the surrounding with bewitching light.

「I am the next king you say? What in the world are you saying!?! No, more importantly that Drag-Ride—?!」

「This is the scales that correct the inclination of the world. Small inclination will be born between two equilibriums, and before long one side will rule and plunder everything of the other side. It's the tragedy of human karma that cannot be escaped from for eternity. It's the mission of hero to manage and correct that. It's the path that you discovered, wished, and chose. You too are walking along the same footprints that I once reached in the past of more than a thousand years ago.」

「A thousand years.....? What are you saying!?! What happened with our revolution!?!」

Lux was driven by an unknown uneasiness and he yelled.

But, Fugil kept showing his aloof smile and talked admonishingly.

「It failed. Our plan was leaked out from Count Atismata's X X. The pitiful X X who received cold treatment since his childhood was led astray by a man's cajolery and sold information to the old empire before Count Atismata's revolution could succeed.」

「.....Such, thing」

With that, the name of Lux who was the true mastermind of the revolution was also leaked out.

In order to bring all the traitors to light, Lux was intentionally let to act free since half a month ago.

And then, Count Atismata who was the pivot of the revolution was also killed just now, and that information was spreading inside the capital.

The revolution failed.

The objective to correct this stagnating and dirty country and create a place where Airi and Philuffy could live peacefully had fallen apart in this place just now.

「Don't worry, my wise younger brother. This history of failure can be overwritten. No one cannot rewind back the time that has passed, but human can forget everything and start over.」

Fugil boasted that with a smile that was filled with bottomless confidence.

「There is no other than you who has the caliber to manage the world. In exchange walk the path of king. That is your duty as an imperial prince.」

「.....That's impossible!? There is no way I can do that! All the conditions that we arranged until now are in order for Count Atismata to ascend to the throne!」

Victory was also indispensable for revolution, but above all else it was the process that would be questioned.

Especially when it came to breaking down a gigantic and old system like the old empire, there was a need to establish the legend of Count Atismata.

He who was a renowned great feudal lord and belonged to the common sense faction since the beginning raised a rebellion against the old empire and

obtained victory. It was important just how much persuasiveness could be inserted into that sequence of events.

Only by doing that this system and the tendency of the era could be shaken from its root for the first time.

「If I claimed that I who am distanced from the imperial family was moving behind the scene and caused the revolution, just who in the world is going to believe that!? Such thing—」

The populace, the country wouldn't accept it.

Like that it would be meaningless.

「Then my wise younger brother. You can just slaughter all the remaining imperial family.」

「——」

「Proclaim that you conspired with Count Atismata to achieve this revolution, and behead your blood relatives of the old empire. I had finished all the groundwork. After that what's left will be to use resonance with Avalon, and imprint the fact that you achieved the revolution as the Black Hero.」

「.....What, are you saying?」

「Display the execution of the remaining imperial family to the populace. Show your resolve and your will to carry that out. With that you will be accepted by the populace as the new emperor. You can only save this country by doing that.」

「—Such, such thing. It's impossible!」

「No, it's possible. After all this me is helping you. Because since the distant past, I have fixed the inclination of the world many times.」

Fugil quietly unsheathed his Sword Device and lifted it toward the sky.

「The scales is already starting to move. The world that all of you wish for, and the wish of the sealed Lords, are starting to appear through Sacred Eclipse. Arshalia is starting to react toward the voices wishing for salvation.」

「.....What are you saying? Who in the world are you?」

Hearing the words of Fugil that sounded as though he was talking to himself, a doubt was created within Lux.

At this point, Lux too was starting to understand.

The history of Arcadia Empire, the knowledge regarding Drag-Ride, the overwhelming strength that Fugil was hiding, Divine Drag-Ride that he had never even seen.

This man who he idolized all this time since the past as big brother wasn't just a heretic of Arcadia Empire, so to speak he was an outsider element of this world.

Or perhaps, rather—.

「—I'm a hero, my wise younger brother. The hero of the beginning who went toward the noble path you wished for, and finally reached the furthest end of that road. My mission has been decided since the start. I will continue to save.」

There was only gentle smile floating on his expression.

An expression of deep affection that let the guard down toward a trusted person.

But—it was terrifying.

The true identity of this man.

And then toward the mysteriousness of what Fugil was trying to achieve, Lux—simply brandished Bahamut's great sword.

Right after that, his memory cut off along with an intense pain.

—

Part 14

「—Over Limit – On!」

When Lux's consciousness returned to the now, his body moved and his voice came out at the same time.

Inside Avalon, the duel against Singlen in the control room.

Singlen who obtained enough water from the ventilation using Ballast used his Divine Raiment and clad himself in water torrent.

Lux too used the instant when the opponent shifted into offense and pulled out his Sword Device, activating Over Limit.

All the limiters that were set to avoid burden to the user and damage to the Drag-Ride itself were turned off, and the whole performance of the Drag-Ride was increased in that state after the release code was entered.

This power that he forgot each time he used it was something that Fugil once taught him.



「Hoo, have you recovered your memory? Or is this just a temporary thing?」

Despite the secret measure that Lux activated, no agitation could be seen from Singlen.

Without even using the power of Baptism that was applied to half his body, he activated the tuning and gazed at Lux.

「.....No. I still cannot remember fully.」

Lux equipped Bahamut which had its shape changed while responding to the conversation also to buy time for the transformation to finish.

At the same time, he sent his thought toward the memory of the past that he lost.

One day before the day he went to Ries Island in order to save Philuffy who was kidnapped for human experiment. Lux was taught by Fugil the release procedure of Over Limit.

But, his memory of what happened that day was erased, and the release procedure was also lost along with his memory.

And then, at the day the revolution was carried out, once again—.

「However, I understand. At that time, I tried to stop Fugil with everything I had. Sir Singlen, a rule like yours is also something I don't wish for!」

Bahamut's armor was shifting to a form with more offensive sharp edge. Lux held up the jet black Chaos Brand in front of him with both hands.

In respond Singlen also smiled and quietly held the Blade that was clad with water.

「You won't be able to surpass me. No matter how much you are able to sacrifice yourself, in the end you are just a half-baked person who don't even have the resolve to dirty your hand. Your righteousness and noble path will be used by someone else before you get discarded and lose everything. That's your limit. I won't commit the same foolishness for the second time.」

Conforming to Singlen who concentrated his hostility, Leviathan's armor was enveloped in faint light.

「I'll subdue the incompetents and fools infesting this world, and take away the seat of god. You don't need to worry, I'll accept you into the world that I'll create after this.」

「Is that your revenge because your ideal was used by someone else and something of yours was taken away?」

「——」

Lux's objection.

Singlen who heard that stopped smiling, and muddy black shadow surfaced in his eye.

Right after that—along with a gush of killing intent that was like the tip of a sword, a water torrent that was transformed into blade was swung.

「Shin Senjin Gouka—Mizuchi」

Kiin, the reverberation of such sound of slicing wind shook Lux's eardrum.

The water torrent that was approaching in the speed that the eye couldn't follow was a blade of certain death that would tear off even a thick armor like paper.

Lux who saw that it would be unblockable even by the barrier that was in Over Limit state diverted the slash using his Chaos Brand as shield along with his barrier.

「—Reload on Fire!」

Lux dodged using the trait of Chaos Brand that could even sever energy while further applying compression strengthening into his special armament.

Lux parried the water blade while hyper accelerating to the front. He charged in a stance of shifting to counter offense.

The attack that he would unleash in the next five seconds would have its might increased by more than ten times.

A mere sword attack would produce explosive destructive power that surpassed Recoil Burst.

That was to say, his victory would be set in stone if he could just land a hit.

Naturally Singlen also grasped that and he should shift into a stance to dodge or counterattack.

(However, because of the Over Limit, the built-in armament Linker Core is also strengthened. Even if he tries to use Senjin – Ruten, I'll put his timing out of order and land the attack!)

But, right after Lux flew convinced in victory, he felt something was out of place.

Singlen's form was getting blurry.

The thick mist that was filling inside the control room blocked even the sight a few ml ahead, erasing the appearance of the enemy.

「So he had taken measure.....」

If Singlen's figure couldn't be seen, it would be pointless no matter how much attack power he had.

But, if the opponent too didn't have radar like special equipment type Drake, it should be impossible for him to detect Lux.

Was his plan to escape for five seconds until the strengthening of Reload on Fire that Lux activated ended?

In that case, he wouldn't let go of that opening. He could only land his own sure kill attack.

「—What are you looking for? Is it fine, going without defense like that?」

「.....-!?」

He could hear Singlen's voice, at the same time the rain that was starting to fall hit Lux's cheek.

That coldness caused Lux who was hovering in air to shudder.

「This is? This rain, don't tell me—!?」

He thought that Singlen would escape from him until five more seconds when his compression strengthening ran out.

Now that a thick mist was filling inside the control room, moving carelessly would cause collision with obstacle.

But, he had heard from Yoruka.

Singlen had a technique that allowed him to fight equally against Yato no Kami that was using radar in darkness.

Net Slicing
「Shin Senjin Mizuki—Amikiri」

Singlen’s faint muttering could be heard from inside the thick mist.

Originally it was a technique to entangle Wire Tail around the enemy’s Drag-Ride, and then reading the Drag-Ride’s preliminary movement through the vibration, predicting the opponent’s movement, but when it was used in Royal Authority combination with Leviathan’s Divine Raiment Leaning, Singlen could probe into the opponent’s location and situation by listening to the reflected sound of the rain fall.

That was to say, inside the thick mist that was generated by his Leaning, he could develop a battle where he obtained one-sided advantage.

The current Lux—had no way to evade that.

「—!?」

A faint killing intent came from behind.

Lux reflexively turned around while horizontally slashing Bahamut’s great sword.

He predicted that because using Senjin that came from tuning and Divine Raiment at the same time required absurd concentration, Singlen wouldn’t be able to use another Senjin at the same time, but the rain already stopped at that time and the mist cleared up.

Outside Cloud
「Shin Senjin Ruten—Ungai」

He was naïve.

The instant Singlen detected Lux’s position and grasped the situation, he switched to another Senjin and focused his full strength to offense and defense against him.

The generated wall of water current that replaced the barrier deflected his

sword, and Singlen lunged with a thrust of full strength.

「Not, yet.....! Linker Pulse!」

The force field from the special armament that was immediately activated without delay moved Bahamut itself, allowing it to barely dodge lethal wound.

But, even so the barrier and the armor near the chest part were shaved, and the after-wave of the impact cracked his ribs.

「Guh, u.....!」

「Do you think that even such rubbish force field can stop my sword if it's strengthened by Over Limit? That's really insolent, chore boy. Thinking that the same method will work twice when the opponent is this me—that hubris deserves a ten thousand deaths.」

「Gu.....!?!」

The defense feature of flesh when receiving damage which was producing intense pain limited Lux's own movement.

With this, Lux was getting checkmated.

He would be defenseless for a few second from now.

For all that Singlen would finish him off in that opening.

「Farewell hero. Turn into a cornerstone to cut open my supreme rule from hereon, Shin Senjin Gouka—Mizuchi.」

(Lisha-sama, everyone. I—)

The blade of death enveloped in water torrent glittered. It approached him with a roar.

Inside his consciousness that was prolonged to the utmost limit, he sent his thought toward the girls who were his companions.

「—Reload on Fire」

Part 15

「Let's go. You new kingdom's bugs. And you too traitorous Onee-sama!」

The autonomous type Fernyiges that protected Avalon, and Hayes who were fused with Sacred Eclipse moved at the same time.

The remaining fighting force at their side was Aeryl, Lisha, Krulcifer, and Philuffy, four people in total.

The Seven Dragon Paladins were taken in by Fernyiges's Divine Raiment. If it wasn't destroyed quickly to rescue them, it would become disadvantageous for their side.

「Let's face them with two each! I and airheaded girl will take the mechanical monster. Aeryl and Krulcifer, aim for Hayes!」

Lisha immediately took the role as commander and gave instruction to everyone.

The Ragnarok that moved following Hayes's will and the comrades who were captured by the Divine Drag-Ride.

There was no doubt that both were troublesome, but she judged that this pairing was the most optimum in this situation.

The Divine Raiment of Zahhak that Aeryl equipped, Brain Hack wouldn't work to Fernyiges that was just a Drag-Ride, and the Divine Raiment of Philuffy's Typhon conversely only had effect against Drag-Ride.

Therefore, Lisha chose the opponent that their respective ability would be effective against.

「—GUoOooOOOOOOOONN!」

The five legged Fernyiges rushed fiercely from a forward-bent posture and lunged with its sharp claws.

Philuffy averted half her body behind and dodged, then she dealt a counter with a thrust of Typhon's fist.

The enemy was also very fast, but the strengthened state of B-blood Typhon and her battle sense won the exchange.

「Good going airheaded girl! Finish it like that!」

In addition Lisha used high speed movement through Wyvern Wing and took the above position of Fernyiges, measuring the timing to unleash the finishing blow.

Due to Typhon's attack that pierced the barrier, the chest part of Fernyiges was smashed. Moreover Philuffy took a step forward and unleashed a spinning kick.

—At the same time, countless Pile Anchors were already entangled on that armor.

After making a tricky evasion, she unleashed a blow using her superb body balance, and when the enemy flinched, she used the opening to entangle the wire and restrained the enemy. Philuffy who pulled in the enemy and dealt her deadly blows consecutively was terrifyingly precise and powerful.

Against Mishis she was unable to finish the battle successfully, but in this situation she was superior as expected.

「—Biting Flare」

The concentrated energy in Typhon's special armament growled to explode the captured enemy.

Lisha who was overlooking from above with her cannon at ready thought that she might not get a turn. It was then Philuffy's movement stopped still.

「.....!？」

「—GUoOOOOONN!」

Right after that, the powerful front kick that Fernyiges unleashed sent Typhon flying backward.

Philuffy barely guarded with both armored arms, but she was unable to offset

the whole impact and she vomited blood.

「You idiot! What are you doing!? Don't stop your attack!」

Lisha aimed the muzzle of Seven Heads below and targeted Fernyiges.

But, the instant she pulled the trigger, a shudder ran through Lisha.

On the head of Fernyiges, Mel and Greifer who seemed unconscious appeared while still in binding.

「Wha-.....!?」

The enemy took in the targeted Drag-Knights not just for its own fuel, it seemed it could also bring them outside freely as shield.

Even when Lisha tried to stop the bombardment in panic, her finger's movement couldn't stop.

The beam was fired toward Fernyiges. It barely missed and cut through air.

Philuffy had reeled in the entangling Pile Anchors and moved Fernyiges.

「So, it's like that.....!」

Lisha stroked her chest in relieve while understanding the circumstance just now.

Philuffy let go of the victory because Fernyiges used their comrade as shield.

「.....What a cowardly guy. Is it really unmanned?」

Lisha bit her lower lip while her body was shaking with righteous indignation.

Even if the enemy's movement was sealed by Suppressor, it would still be able to move around the hostage that was absorbed by its Divine Raiment.

They not only needed to be careful of its inside, even attack toward its important spot was sealed. Like this there was no chance of victory.

While Lisha and Philuffy were hesitating, Krulcifer and Aeryl who saw that were carrying out intense battle at the side.

「That's really an inhuman act. I wonder if even the Drag-Ride is imitating its owner?」

Krulcifer who was activating Full Connect deployed Auto Shield to surround

Hayes.

Originally it was Fafnir's special armament that automatically protected itself, but by scattering the seven shields around the enemy, it became possible for reflecting shot using ricochet.

The tactic that evolved the armament's original user, and the activation of Wise Blood that realized even more precise and smoother action.

She sniped to choke the life out of Hayes who was absorbed by Sacred Eclipse, but,

「—What's going on!? Wise Blood – Accel doesn't work.」

It was the ability that went further than future prediction, deriving the future path that reached to victory from the present situation, but that power wasn't working. Krulcifer was bewildered by that fact.

Even if it was an ability to derived the future that was just as the user wished, but if the battle situation was far from ideal, then it was reasonable that such future couldn't be seen.

Therefore, it showed just how overwhelmingly dangerous the current situation was. But before Krulcifer could realize that, Hayes's attack pierced through.

「Ih.....!?」

Hayes who traveled a long distance crossed over space and teleported instantly. The Sword Device of Fernyiges in her hand struck Fafnir.

The Auto Shield that was originally would automatically defend was diverted for offense, exposing a defenseless opening that Hayes took advantage of.

「You blundered you bitch, you were naively seeing me as just a mere human huh? Did you forget? Right now I'm Sacred Eclipse yeah-!?」

That was o.

Her appearance was nothing more than a flesh and blood human girl, but her inside was the greatest and strongest human type Ragnarok. The attack that was unleashed from that physical strength easily broke Fafnir's armor and transmitted overwhelming impact to Krulcifer.

「—Krulcifer-san!?!」

Aeril activated Zahhak's Divine Raiment in order to protect Krulcifer.

Using the ability of Brain Hack to erase only a designated information from the memory of the living thing around, Krulcifer's existence was vanished from Hayes's memory—but,

「The moment you joined their side, you are planning to sell favor to this bunch huh, Aneue-sama? It's shameless bastard like you that touch my nerve the most.」

Hayes widely opened her jet black eyes and glared at Aeril with a demonic killing intent.

Zahhak swung Breath Whip and restrained Hayes's whole body, but the branch that stretched out from the whip's gap attacked Aeril.

「Guh.....!?!」

Because Krulcifer got hit by space teleportation just now, she split her attention to be on guard against that. That decision turned out to be a bad one.

The root of Yggdrasil's branch grew to outside Hayes's body and pierced through Zahhak's barrier with a speed that the eye couldn't follow.

It was barely stopped by the armor, but the impact couldn't be blocked.

Aeril vomited blood. Her armor was dispelled and she began to freefall.

「Hyahahahah! This feels good! Trash like you bastard introducing yourself as Lord is unforgivable! —Die」

Along with a brutal gaze, a branch stretched out from Hayes's body to attack further.

But, her body that was floating in air felt impact on the back and her whole body froze instantly.

Krulcifer who recovered her balance carried out consecutive shots using her Freezing Cannon.

「Getting carried away when the situation become just slightly advantageous for you is your bad habit.」

「.....Guess so. I'll warn you as your big sister. You should fix that habit of yours!」

Furthermore the Breath Whip of Zahhak that had temporarily loosened entwined around the frozen Hayes once more.

And then, energy was transmitted through the whip and the whip was pulled forcefully.

Zan-!

Along the friction that the whip caused, Hayes's limbs were severed.

「—Sorry, Hayes.-!?!」

The moment Aeryl averted her face from that gruesome end, her body was frozen along with Zahhak.

The lips on Hayes who only had her head left warped into a wicked grin.

「Stop it with the worthless acting, you hypocrite.」

「-.....!?!」

Aeryl saw it at that moment.

Hayes's body that became in pieces instantly regenerated and reconnected to each other.

That was the regeneration ability of Poseidon. Furthermore using Fenrir's ability, this time it was Aeryl herself whose movement was sealed.

And then Yggdrasil's branch that grew out once more from Hayes's body was poised to pierce that body. It was then Krulcifer stood in the way.

「Haa, haa.....wait!」

「—Irritating. A mere lowly insect of the theocracy like you dare!」

Instantly, more than dozens of branches grew out from Hayes's back and attacked Krulcifer.

Although some of the branches were blocked by Auto Shield that had returned to her, she couldn't dodge the remaining branches and her armor was smashed.

「Tsu....., aa.....」

Because Full Connect assimilated a part of the body with nanomachine, the impact to the armor was strongly felt.

With that her body that was completely spent from the intense battle against Mishis crumbled down.

「Trying to fight me in that kind of ragged state, you are underestimating me. You two can watch leisurely from there how that fake prince will writhe in agony. Hyahahaha」

「.....」

Aeril whose whole body was frozen except her head already couldn't move at all.

But, the two who were greatly injured noticed a certain thing.

Sacred Eclipse that absorbed Hayes's will had already inherited the ability of six Ragnarok.

Most likely if Sacred Eclipse was destroyed one more time, when it was revived once more it would unify the power of seven Ragnarok and transformed into the final form of devil god that would destroy the world.

There was no way they could leave alone Hayes who was in this state, but the two were already at their limit.

At the very least, if they could just stop Hayes's movement.

When they turned their gaze toward Lisha and Philuffy to entrust that last hope—.

「HAaaAaaAAAAAH.....!」

Lisha closed in at Fernyiges with a roar that nearly sounded like a scream.

There was no more time or strength remaining.

She had changed the Over Unit into Wyrms Claw and went into the last gamble.

The strengthening part that grew out from Tiamat's shoulders was a supplemental armament that boasted overwhelming firepower in close range

combat.

The drill that was rotating in high speed easily pierced and destroyed Fernyiges's barrier, but the enemy escaped at the last moment.

「Chih! This kind of thing, normally it would have been defeated a long time ago already.....!」

Lisha and Philuffy exceeded it in pure fighting strength, but it was problematic that the captured Seven Dragon Paladins were turned into hostage.

The moment they went to decide the match, the hostages would be surely thrust before their eyes and the enemy would escape.

If they didn't seal the Divine Raiment of the enemy that used their comrades as shield, there would be no prospect of victory.

Therefore, they were thinking that their only option was to use Typhon's Divine Raiment—Missing Faith to neutralize the enemy's Divine Raiment and destroyed Fernyiges at that moment.

However, the enemy's getaway was too fast.

Therefore Lisha went ahead to bind the enemy with Suppressor's gravity, but to think at that moment the two who were tasked to hold back Hayes were defeated.

(The plan went amiss! That Hayes—no, Sacred Eclipse is actually that strong.....!)

「Hoo, that's really something to endure that well against Fernyiges. That guy is the guard dog from hell that protects Avalon. Don't think that it can be defeated easily okay? Well—it will be irritating if the bunches inside it are saved here. I'll join in too.」

Judging that Krulcifer and Aeril were already put in ice and unable to fight, Hayes grinned smugly and headed toward Lisha and Philuffy's position.

The plan should be to crush each opponent as fast as possible, but it became an inconceivable miscalculation.

Lisha and Philuffy were already passing the limit of their stamina too.

Most likely there were only one or two minutes left until their Divine Drag-Ride reached the operation limit.

The next offense and defense would undoubtedly decide their fate.

「Don't struggle you trashes, after all you bastard inferior race has no way to win against us Lord. Besides you are thinking that the bunch inside Fernyiges can be saved if you destroy it, but if you mistake where to hit they will die from the impact you know?」

「You are making a threat? We've got no time making inane chatter with you!」

「Then just try it. You're gonna be able to see something interesting like that.」

Seeing Hayes's wicked grin, Lisha judged that she was most likely telling the truth.

In front of Hayes who was looking triumphant while holding her Sword Device, Lisha planned the last gamble.

—

Part 16

「.....」

The deep level floor of Avalon, the control room.

While the Gear Leader, the Automata Arshalia was watching, Lux and Singlen's death match was continuing before the third trial that would connect to the central.

Pain was the body's defensive function that suppressed the damage to the flesh and communicated the abnormality in body function.

Especially large damage to the nerve, it would completely bind the whole body's movement.

While the instinct realized that such thing was exactly what would lead to their demise, that function couldn't be stopped.

Even though all limiters were released using Over Limit, the user Lux couldn't be like that.

His body should be unable to move in this moment due to the impact and intense pain from Singlen's blow to him.

No matter how much he had trained his body, how much he had polished his natural talent, from the view point of the opponent this was a definite chance of victory with no room for doubt.

「.....—What did you do?」

Therefore, Lux's deadly blow landed without fail toward this opponent who was at the nearest from being perfect.

The shoulder of Singlen's Leviathan was broken, and his Force Core was exposed.

At the same time the all of the Drag-Ride's functions went down, and even

Singlen's flesh body was cut up.

「—Gu, ga!」

After a moment that didn't even reach a second, Singlen's body was blown backward.

He crashed on the metallic wall far away, and then like that his movement stopped while being stuck on the wall.

「Haa, haa.....!」

Lux who saw that lifted his body and grasped the situation.

It was an extreme situation where even his consciousness almost flew away, but it seemed he made it in time just barely.

「I, see..... Ku, kuku, I wasn't wrong just as I thought. You, are, terrifying..... With the resolve to sacrifice your own life—」

The voice of Singlen that came from dozens of m ahead sounded very far for the current Lux.

The sound of his blood flow *gou gou* and his nerve being burned struck his eardrum.

If the secret of the trick was to be disclosed, Lux crushed Singlen using one of the three hidden techniques he invented, Quick Draw.

However because of the damage that Lux received just before that, his body was paralyzed and unable to move for a few seconds.

Even if he was able to move, his broken bones and deep laceration should restrict the range of his action drastically.

「—Reload on Fire. So to speak the moment my attack hit you, you reduce your own pain into less than a tenth.....so, it's like that.」

Singlen vomited blood while still putting on his smile.

That was the correct answer.

Reload on Fire—.

It was the Divine Raiment of compression effect that caused rapid decrease at

the first five seconds, and explosive increase at the next five seconds, and it worked for every kind of phenomenon and energy. The user would shoulder risk at first when activating it.

Consequently originally its biggest weakness was its lack of speedy effect, but Lux's clever scheme reversed that.

The intense pain that was a chain binding him was neutralized by Reload on Fire, and he landed a counterattack using Quick Draw on Singlen who was convinced of his victory.

Senjin Gouka was a technique that used tuning to concentrated Drag-Ride's energy to the maximum into one point.

So to speak, while attacking with that, even the barrier couldn't be deployed properly and the defensive power weakened remarkably.

Furthermore with Over Limit, Lux struck with output and mobility that were originally suppressed in consideration of the burden to the Drag-Ride and flesh body.

With that, the slash that originally would be relatively light was boosted up until it became a lethal sword stroke.

The Linker Pulse that he used previously so to speak was a bait to lure Singlen.

The plan that gambled his life bore fruit and crushed this terrifyingly powerful person.

「Kukuku.....but, do you understand, chore prince? This path that you choose. Your destiny that will visit you in a few more seconds—」

「.....」

He knew.

In order to stop Singlen, Lux ignored the intense pain running in his body and landed a strike without even thinking of the burden on him.

It would become intense pain and impact more than ten times the original three seconds later that would surely burn Lux's body and heart.

The possibility was high that his mind would broke and then he fainted, or he

would die from the shock.

The burden to the body that he overworked also wouldn't be light.

「—I can endure it.」

Even now when his heart was ruled by the anxiety of hopeless death, Lux showed a calm smile.

「After all I received and endured the second trial just as you wished, for the sake of this kind of situation.」

「—!？」

Singlen's one eye opened wide in shock for the first time here hearing Lux's words.

Avalon's trial in order to connect to the central.

Strengthening of the mind through application of mental burden, and body strengthening through administering of Elixir.

Of course, Lux had no way of knowing the detail of the trial, so it wasn't like he had planned everything, but even coincidentally, if it could become a factor to lead into the situation of this moment—.

—

「The time limit of five minutes has passed. The condition of connecting with central isn't accomplished, so one minute later, the people here will be teleported outside. Reactivation until the next qualified person can enter will need five minutes.」

—

Automata Arshalia's robotic voice indifferently resounded inside the control room.

For the time being, the risk of Singlen making use of Arcadia blood by having Lux connecting to the central was gone, but the problem was from here on.

Fugil and Listelka should be still waiting outside, and most importantly there was also the existence of Sacred Eclipse.

And then, Lux would definitely lose consciousness after this from Reload on

Fire’s backlash.

「—GU! AAaaaAAaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!」

A scream that was unthinkable to have come from him thundered inside the room. Intense pain burned his whole body.

In the middle of that sensation of only five seconds that felt like eternity, Lux kept his hold to his hazy consciousness even then.

But, that was all.

He couldn’t move even a single finger anymore.

His body was paralyzed, and even his breathing felt like it would stop.

「Kukuku, what are you planning to do in that state? I and Leviathan can revive one more time using Baptism and Lithograph of Counterfeit Slyt . It will be the end if you are killed outside by me you know? What you gained here is nothing more than a short postponement.」

「.....That’s, enough. After this Aeryl, Captain Magialca, and others will stop your scheme and Fugil too. There are also Lisha-sama and others. Even if their opponent is Sacred Eclipse, they won’t be defeated that easily.」

「You will use up all your strength and rely on someone else’s strength? Is a hero like you satisfied with that?」

「Yeah, I will rely on other.」

Lux immediately replied at Singlen’s sarcasm with a quiet smile.

「Our comrades, all of them have really.....become strong. I can believe on them without doubt, Sir Singlen. Unlike the strong you who are unable to seriously believe in anyone.」

「.....」

Knowing one’s own limit and able to entrust one’s wish on comrades who could be trusted was also strength.

He wouldn’t be able to do something reckless like this time if he was unable to believe on Lisha and others.

When Lux noticed that for the first time, he comprehended Singlen's true nature.

He thought that this man before his eyes could only recognize other people by ruling over them and acted like a tyrant.

Surely this man—was too much of a prodigy even in Blackend Kingdom.

Whether it was in quick wits, in strength, and also in foresight, he was too outstanding in all of them.

From his birth, this man was a genius who touched every kind of height.

That was why he scoffed at the defect and foolishness of other people. He put distance from them and displayed disgust.

After all human was originally weak living thing no matter who.

He said that he was trying to make Lux his subordinate to make use of him as disposable piece.

That might also be the truth.

But, if he was sniffing the same scent like himself from Lux—.

Then perhaps he might be wishing for a comrade who could keep up with him.

Perhaps he wished to obtain someone powerful who was his equal who he could recognize.

For some reason, right now he got such feeling.

「.....Thirty seconds remaining until we are send out from here. As a prize from defeating me once, I'll teach you the truth. What will happen from now on, when you are trying to follow the same path like me in the past.」

「.....The, truth?」

Lux tilted his head hearing Singlen's words that he spoke out along with a fearless smile.

「It's something you will understand soon but, even if you know the truth after this, surely you won't remember it after you get rewound. But, you have received Elixir three times with that body. Now you have resistance toward

modification. Then, if you can just grasp the impetus you will be able to recall the time—just like this me.」

「What, do you mean.....?」

The moment Lux showed his doubt, Singlen started talking.

After a conversation of around twenty seconds, Lux fainted before he was teleported outside.

「—Farewell chore boy. Ruin yourself in pipe dream that won't come true by all means, along with your spoiled kid's ideal that is soaked in sugar. I'll crush this fictive world and teach the foolish masses the reality. This is a temporary farewell until you remember the despair.」

Inside the consciousness that was covered by deep darkness, the voice of that arrogant tyrant was remaining in his ears.

—

Part 17

「The connection with the central isn't carried out. In one more minute the qualified people inside will be ejected outside.」

「.....!？」

Near the entrance to the graveyard that was located at the back of the imperial capital's castle.

The robotic voice of Arshalia could be heard there. Lisha and Philuffy held their breath.

Because Sacred Eclipse that was necessary for the last trial fused with Hayes and went on rampage, it should be impossible to connect with the central, but with this the survival of Lux and Singlen were confirmed.

「So Lux is also safe..... Then, there is no way we can lose here!」

Lisha dispelled the Wyrms Claw of Over Unit.

She drew out her other Sword Device and summoned Drake Horn from it and then connected with it.

With the addition of the support function of the special equipment type, the Drag-Ride's maximum output was also drastically strengthened.

Because it was components, the ability of special equipment type general purpose Drag-Ride to give support strengthening could be applied to her own Drag-Ride too.

(As compensation, it put even more burden to my body. But, I'll bet on this choice!)

Lisha readied her Sword Device toward Fernyiges that was attacking Philuffy.

And then she called out to her comrade who was continuously fighting while turning herself into Abyss.

『Oi airheaded girl, I'll leave the rest to you! Lux too!』

『.....Yes. Leave it to me.』

Philuffy responded to Lisha's voice that came through Dragon Voice.

The number of words they exchanged was few, but Philuffy had guessed it.

Including the reason why even though both of them should be similarly near their limit, why did Lisha deliberately said such thing.

Fernyiges launched a kick with its three front legs, but Philuffy blocked it with her armored arms. At that moment, those front legs were blown away.

「—GUooOOOOON!？」

「What?」

Hayes who saw that from distance also frowned in puzzlement.

「Like always, that woman use strange technique!」

Lisha herself didn't fully understand what happened, but she knew about that technique from her mock battle against Philuffy.

It was her unique Drag-Ride operation.

The foundation of martial art that she inherited from Magialca made use of body weight transfer, release of strength, and also the opponent's strength.

Similar like Lux's Critical Hit, the moment the opponent's attack hit, by suppressing the point where strength was generated, the strength of the opponent's attack was returned as it was.

This girl with talent subjugated the influence of Abyss and obtained that strength in order to stay at Lux's side.

Next Philuffy entwined Pile Anchor around Fernyiges. In that instant Lisha activated her Divine Raiment.

「—High Suppressor!」

Fernyiges's armor creaked due to Divine Raiment of gravity burden that was strengthened by more than two times.

「—GI, GUOoooOOOON!」

Fernyiges's armor reflexively shined and it tried to push out the five Seven Dragon Paladins that were absorbed inside to use them as shield.

—But, Typhon's Missing Faith that was unleashed at the same time negated it a step ahead.

「GI, GAGYAaaaAAA.....!」

Fernyiges was smashed up, leaving behind the reverberation of destruction that sounded like a scream of death agony.

But, at that instant the armor's upper part was detached. Only the head and shoulders, and then the back wings escaped.

「.....It detached!? Even though Seven Dragon Paladins are below!」

「Yeah, certainly those guys are in the lower body part. But, If Fernyiges's main body isn't destroyed, the people inside won't return to consciousness!」

The triumphant voice caused Lisha to gasp.

Hayes who was on the ground lifted up her hand and unleashed light. In that instant Lisha's body was sent flying back.

「—Howling Purge!」

It was obvious that Hayes would aim at Lisha when she was full of opening in order to defeat Fernyiges.

Consequently, Lisha who was already nearly her limit beforehand had prepared to escape from her armor.

A moment later, Lisha's released armor was smashed up along with a distortion in space.

It was destruction by the space grasping of Deus ex Machina that Sacred Eclipse inherited.

Lisha was barely able to let Tiamat's Force Core to escape from that, so although it would take time, the Drag-Ride would be able to be fixed.

There was no doubt that it was a hard blow for her, but there was no substitute for life.

「I'll leave the rest to you.....airheaded girl, I didn't want to let you to risk your

body or anything though.....」

Lisha pulled out her remaining Sword Device and summoned Wyvern Wing right under herself to use as cushion.

Even so she was unable to neutralize the falling impact completely and she raised a small groan.

「It's finally, the limit huh..... I have faith you know, Lux. Faith on you, and also on the formidable members of the 『pact』 too.」

Lisha left behind a weak smile and strength left her body.

The battle against Dragon Marauder the other day, and the intense battle against Mishis.

And then the reuse of Over Unit in addition.

She concealed her exhaustion and fought to the end under the burden that her small body couldn't endure, and she finally ran out of strength.

Even so, she didn't have the slightest anxiety and regret.

Lisha who was once abandoned by her father who was a great man and given the heavy responsibility of being a princess was able to fight with reliable comrades in a way that she could accept.

Surely Hayes had never experienced something like that even once.

Inside her cut off consciousness, Lisha was harboring a slight pity.

—

「—So she got away, well it doesn't matter. It won't be long until that fake prince got chased out from the control room. The Seven Dragon Paladins too, they won't be able to move for a few minutes after getting freed from Fernyiges. Next if you bitch just die, I'll be able to obtain Avalon leisurely.」

「.....」

There was only Philuffy alone in Hayes's view.

Listelka was hiding. Fugil was standing by to protect her.

Listelka who didn't want to lose Fugil was surely aiming to make both sides

exhausted themselves before taking advantage of that.

If Philuffy was defeated and Hayes was finished off when she was dying, it would also be possible to reset Sacred Eclipse.

But, Hayes had no intention to allow that.

If she defeated Philuffy and entered the control room, she would be able to steal a march on Listelka and connected to the central.

And then, right now Philuffy was already wounded all over.

She barely maintained the shape of B-blood Typhon using Yggdrasil's root that gave strengthening until the armor, but even that wouldn't last long.

The limit would arrive for her in less than a minute.

「Kuhahaha! This is really funny. And it's also really pitiful woman. You won't be able to stop this me even if you turn into that kind of monster. You who are just a victim of my human experience, it doesn't matter even if you lay that life on the line!」

「.....」

Hayes provoked Philuffy to invite her attack, but Philuffy didn't even twitch while her blank face kept looking dazed.

She simply moved the wheels of her armored feet gradually and began to accelerate from afar.

In order to gamble everything in the next instant of exchange.

「Are you okay doing that, monster? The more you use that strength, the more your life is shaved. More accurately speaking, the seed of Yggdrasil will rapidly encroach inside you and you won't even be able to return to human form you know?」

「.....」

「If that happen that fake prince might break for real this time yeah. No, unexpectedly he might not want to even look at you anymore.」

「It's, pitiful.」

Words spilled out in small voice from Philuffy's lips.

Hayes judged that it was an opening in her heart and she readied her Sword Device while provoking even more.

「Haha, so you think that you're pitiful eh? But it doesn't change the fact that you bitch is a monster. After all—」

「It's you, you know?」

「.....-!?!」

But, Philuffy's indifferent voice caused Hayes to be the one who lost her words this time.

At the same time, darkness was spreading inside her heart.

Exactly because it was Philuffy's blunt words that weren't filled with emotion that Hayes's heart was greatly shaken, and the memory of the past was resurrected at the back of her mind.

—

「Hayes-sama, so you are at this kind of place?」

「What. You found me here really late ain't you? I'm just a disposable piece after all.」

At the courtyard of Arcadia Empire before its destruction.

Mishis who acted as maid who took care after the imperial princess's need was standing beside Hayes who was hiding at the shade of a tree.

Hayes who was lying down on the green lawn had one of her eyes covered with eye patch.

A few days ago, she just got the surgery of Baptism using Elixir performed to her in exchange of overwhelming pain.

「Your highness is jesting. —Now, it's time for study. Let's learn refinement and knowledge that are suitable for an imperial princess. In addition it's also necessary to learn the technique to obtain the right of control of Automata using the Baptism that your highness received the other day.」

「Just what meaning there is in my existence? I'll take up the responsibility if my two Onee-sama die, as the substitute of those two that is.」

The third imperial princess sniggered negligently. The iron maid calmly spoke in respond.

「The three of you are shouldering the great cause of leading the world as the summit of the Lord.」

「That's wrong ain't it? I'm just living as those Onee-sama's gopher. The manager of the garden that exploit the lowly masses so the imperial family and the nobility can have it easy in the peace. And I'm an underling among that.」

「—Human, no matter who has their own role. Escaping from that fate will only get them forced into another different discomfort. In other words freedom is nothing more than discovering oneself inside the lack of freedom. Meaning of one's existence is also the same. To always facing down will only cause nothing but dark shadow being reflected in your eyes.」

「Is Key's Supervisor made to learn even the way to lecture? What an exaggerated maid huh.」

「Even like this I am the top member among my people, so I will be disqualified if I'm unable to help your highness get back on your feet.」

Hayes who heard Mishis's words made an ironical smile.

「Then, it might be better if I intentionally make you fail, leaving a stain on your achievement.」

「Please do as you will. Now, let's start studying.」

Hayes noticed that Mishis's smile was an artificial one.

She was a splendid person who possessed both talent and strength, but in the end she only obeyed Hayes because of her duty.

Lord—the clan that ruled at the top of the world, what meaning was there in such existence?

Hayes herself was just an existence to secure the empire, furthermore she was just a decoration with authority that was far below her elder sisters.

She had nothing to obtain or taken away from her.

Such sense of value of Hayes was broken apart in a few days.

By allowing the rebellion by the family of traitor, the majority of the imperial family and nobility ended up dead, and as an imperial family member their anger was targeted on her.

Because she was a symbol of Arcadia Empire, she was also turned into a target of hatred.

『How dare you did that to my daughter! To my family!』

『I'll carve the resentment of my family to you bastard!』

The captured Hayes received violence with no question asked. It happened after Listelka and Aeryl escaped first by Mishis's arrangement, and then unluckily Hayes was discovered.

Fortunately, she was rescued before she received lethal injury and then she fell asleep in the Ark, but the terror of that time stuck on her.

『I am the third.』

She was nothing more than a substitute for her elder sisters, a spare.

She could only persist in shadow without obtaining glory, and turned into target by those vulgar low-born.

『I refuse that..... If that's what they want then I'll just do that! I'll replace my sisters and show them all! I have the caliber of king that should rule over this world! I'll teach them all in the new world!』

Hayes who woke up several years ago yelled that and started moving in the free world in order to test her own capability.

While blazing with the flame of revenge toward Lux who was a descendant of the family of traitor.

And then—.

Part 18

「—I am, the chosen existence by Sacred Eclipse! I've surpassed my sisters and the family of traitor! But a mere bitch like you! A failed guinea pig monster dare to pity me!」

Hayes assaulted toward Philuffy along with a jet black killing intent.

In respond Typhon also accelerated and drew back its right arm and concentrated the energy there.

The aim was a one hit kill using Biting Flare.

The moment Hayes paid attention to that, countless Pile Anchors were fired from the armor's surface.

First she judged that it was an attempt to hold the opponent's movement in check and if possible restrained the opponent.

Of course it was already known that Hayes was able to use Sacred Eclipse's ability—the space teleportation.

In other words, it was a feint to make her performed her trump card first.

「Idiot! Eat this!」

「.....-!?!」

Hayes who saw that first unleashed fire arrows like bullets in radiating shape.

Because the attached flame used Phoenix's ability so it wouldn't vanish, the target would be forced to dodge.

It seemed Philuffy had foresighted that, she made the tip of a Pile Anchor pierced a lump of rubble and reeled it in, using it as shield against the fire arrows.

Furthermore she directly struck with a huge rubble that her armored hand grasped.

This time it was Hayes's turn to be forced into defense.

(Calm down—I who obtained the power of Sacred Eclipse should be overwhelmingly stronger. I've inherited all ability except Metatron's.)

Hayes followed the voice she could hear inside her head and formed a strategy.

At the end she wanted to stab Philuffy's heart with Fernyiges's Sword Device, but the opponent had sharp instinct.

She might get targeted instead the moment she teleported to the space behind her.

Then,

「Drop dead you monster! With the same power of Yggdrasil like you!」

The branches growing out from Hayes's whole body were fired like countless spears.

They easily pierced Typhon's strengthened barrier and also pierced the hands and legs of Philuffy that weren't covered by pilot suit.

Though from the start, she couldn't help but thinning the protection for her limbs in order to protect her torso and head.

「Tsu.....!?!」

Even Philuffy who was always expressionless frowned from the intense pain from her pierced limbs.

But, she noticed something graver than that.

「Kukuku, you noticed? It's over already for you. Now you can't move at all! Get torn apart into pieces just like that!」

The branches stabbing her limbs also entwined around her nerves, sealing even the movement of her fingertips.

Consequently controlling the Drag-Ride using the control stick became impossible.

「I'm looking forward what kind of face that fake prince will make when he come out from the control room! I'll teach him the greatness of this me—」

「You won't. I won't, let you.」

But, Philuffy whose expression turned blank like usual murmured with a small voice.

「Because, I also remembered. That day Lu-chan came to save me in Ries Island. What happened there.」

The memory remaining inside Philuffy was awakened in this deep level floor of Avalon.

How in order to save Philuffy, Lux went to Ries Island without even considering the danger.

And then, how he was wailing while holding herself who had stopped breathing too.

「I wanted to say, I'm fine. I wanted to smile to him like usual. But—at that time, I couldn't do that.」

Philuffy who was usually taciturn muttered her own feeling like that.

「I won't die. Because I want to be together with Lu-chan. Because Lu-chan told me, he want me together with him forever.」

Gashi-, the armored arm of B-blood Typhon grabbed Hayes's body.

She should be unable to move her body with her nerves pierced, but Philuffy stretched out branches from her back and made it touched her Sword Device.

「Wha-.....!?!」

The instant Hayes gasped, the wire that Philuffy fired into the wall at the front before this was wound in high speed.

She kept restraining Hayes with her armored arm while she herself rushed madly ahead using Typhon's skating toward the castle wall that the tip of Pile Anchor drove into.

She was winding back the nailed wire to make herself head forward, in addition of the acceleration using the wheels of the armored feet.

Typhon punched through air along with terrifying mass behind it toward the giant rampart at the front.

Toward the intersection of power that was carried out with maximum output. She was rushing forward to thrust out Hayes' body that she was grasping.

「Impossible-! How can you move this precisely in a state where your limbs cannot move!?!」

What shocked Hayes wasn't the technique of mind control operation using Sword Device, it was how Philuffy was making use of Yggdrasil's power while perfectly maintaining her sanity.

Through administering of Elixir three times, Hayes's mind was turned strange and rampaged.

In contrast even though Philuffy had her body smeared with the power of Abyss, unlike when she was once taken over by Yggdrasil, there was no wavering at all in her.

Surely it was also because the man body of the Ragnarok had died.

Because the brainwashing power had weakened, she could manage the power of Abyss skillfully.

Even so, it was hard to believe.

The strength of this girl called Philuffy.

She changed the strength of her feeling to Lux into power, in order to accomplish what she ought to accomplish.

『It's, pitiful.』

Hayes's ears could hear Philuffy's words before this once more.

The meaning of those words was about Hayes who was unable to believe and rely on anyone else from her heart.

No matter how cruel the fate that trampled this girl, she was unyielding.

「Don't, screw with me-.....! I—」

Typhon that skated with maximum speed thrust out its right arm toward the castle wall.

The full strength destructive power that was backed by heavy weight of land battle type Divine Drag-Ride was focused without any other place to escape to.

.....*DOGAA-AAAA!*

The thick and high rampart of the old castle was smashed up into the shape of spider web along with a dull impact sound.

The instant strength loosened from Hayes's body, Typhon's special armament activated.

「—Biting Flare」

The energy that was sent inside the body burst open Hayes's body.

「GU, aaaAaAAAA.....!」

Shockwave and heat blast pierced her whole body and reached until the solid core, destroying it.

The agony that she didn't feel until now came back and scream was thrown up from inside her throat.

「Haa, haa.....」

Right after that, Philuffy's armor was dispelled and she fell on her knee on the broken road.

It was an attack where she literally squeezed out everything she had.

But, even after receiving lethal wound, Hayes who was fused with Sacred Eclipse still hadn't died.

「You, insects..... I'll, kill you! There is no, way, I'll get defeated by the like of you.....!」

Because her core was damaged, Poseidon's super regeneration ability didn't function properly, but she lifted up Fernyiges's Sword Device and pointed the tip to Philuffy to skewer her.

But, looking closer the blade of the Sword Device had been smashed into pieces from its root.

「Chih.....! So this is your true target from the start!」

Hayes clicked her tongue and comprehended Philuffy's aim.

The Sword Device of Fernyiges was pulverized by the after wave of Biting

Flare that boasted overwhelming destructive power.

Thus the autonomous Divine Drag-Ride was also desummoned and vanished from this place.

The Seven Dragon Paladins who were absorbed inside were also ejected and they were recovering their consciousness.

And then unnoticed a pillar of light rose from nearby and the Automata Arshalia showed her figure.

『The two people inside the control room ran out of time and were teleported slightly away from here. I'm waiting for the next qualified person who had finished until the second trial.』

「Fu, kukuku.....! Kuhahahaha.....!」

Voice of joy welled up from the half crumbling body of Hayes.

In this situation, she was blessed with the chance to obtain the central ahead of others.

There was a few more minutes until the Seven Dragon Paladins could move. Aeryl, Lisha, Krulcifer, and also Philuffy couldn't move anymore.

Listelka too was still hiding along with Fugil.

She was defeated in the duel against Philuffy, even so she was still alive now.

And then, there was nobody else but her who could take away Avalon in this situation.

「.....It's my win! I'll connect with the central and become this world's king. I'll make anyone and everyone submit-!」

Hayes laughed loudly in place of a victory song.

She approached a step, then one more step toward Arshalia, then suddenly someone's presence appeared behind her.

The one who appeared with small footstep sound was the first imperial princess Listelka Rei Arshalia.

And then Fugil wearing Bahamut was standing at her side.

「.....What's your business at this point huh, Aneue-sama? If it's congratulation that it's still too early yeah.」

「Thank you for your hard work, Hayes. You have done well to rout the bandits swarming to Avalon. I will make sure to make your accomplishment be known by the Lord's posterity.」

「.....」

Listelka's attitude and smile was graceful like usual.

However, cold shadow surfaced on Hayes's expression

「Thanks for your hard work, you saaay? A weakling bug who got cold feet and hid in the shadow till the end, is acting high and mighty only when it's convenient like this, that just ain't acceptable right? Chichi-ue and others who father conceded the throne to you must be crying right now.」

An expression that was filled with blunt displeasure and hostility.

Her tattered bodies were crumbling while regenerating. The roots of Yggdrasil were crawling around her.

But, even after seeing that rebelling will in Hayes's eyes, Listelka's gentle attitude didn't crumble.

「Hayes. Thank you very much for everything until now. Your naughtiness since a thousand years ago has been bothersome, but you can be proud that you can become a cornerstone for the Lord like this. That's why, please move away from there. If I don't hurry, the Seven Dragon Paladins will wake up and it will become troublesome again.」

「.....Then, I'll also give a warning yeah, o honorable Aneue-sama.」

Hayes's aura changed at Listelka's reaction that didn't mesh at all.

「I'll kill you if you get one step closer. You can just watch my path of supremacy quietly. It's me who won the victory. Even the current me can kill you two easily.」

Hayes gave that threat and touched the forehead of the Automata Arshalia.

But, the main body of Automata didn't show any reaction.

「.....Why!? Why isn't it reacting!? The voice of Sacred Eclipse that I can hear is certainly—」

When she woke up, there was a voice telling her that it was possible for her to connect with the central.

If that was a voice that came because she fused with Sacred Eclipse—a revelation from Avalon, then there should be no mistake, and yet...

The unexpected happening caused Hayes to frown.

Then Listelka laughed with a lonely voice.

「Hayes. It's impossible for you. Because, the current you is Sacred Eclipse itself. The last condition to connect with the central, is for your ego to vanish, and the Sacred Eclipse will fuse with the proper qualified person.」

「.....No-! I can hear a voice from inside me! The will of Avalon, it was talking to me after I fused with Sacred Eclipse!」

Hayes was flustered and yelled. Listelka let out a sigh seeing that.

She brushed her front hair with her hand, and her red magic eye that received Baptism shined.

「Hayes. I am the shrine maiden of oracle. The first imperial princess who is the summit of the Lord. I have the power to intervene with Avalon. That was why, when you were resurrected, I performed a bit of trick. So that your brain is connected to Avalon's—perception manipulation device, and accept my voice as suggestion in your mind.」

「.....Wha, a!」

Despair and shock ran through the face of Hayes who heard that.

Brainwashing was already inserted into her mind when she was resurrected after her first defeat against Lux.

She accepted Listelka's voice as revelation from Avalon and she was manipulated in order to hinder Lux and co.

Controlling Sacred Eclipse itself was impossible even for Listelka, but when Sacred Eclipse absorbed Hayes, she was able to use Hayes's will and moved

Sacred Eclipse to a certain degree.

Listelka made use of the situation that came to be by accident and performed a trick.

「It was a godsend that you was absorbed by Sacred Eclipse. Thanks to that their attention was drawn to you. Now please vanish quickly. You already—have no more use.」

There was no change at all in Listelka.

She thrust the farewell before her little sister like it was only natural, with the same gaze and voice and gesture just like in the past.

Unnoticed, Hayes's own hand smashed the damaged core.

From the start Listelka's intention was for her to vanish after removing all the hindrances.

「Don't, screw, with me..... THIS DEMOOOooNNNN-!」

Hayes yelled with tears of blood flowing from her eyes, with her right arm still stabbed into her core.

She lifted up her remaining other hand and wrung out her last strength to grow out Yggdrasil's branch.

She roared to skewer the surrounding with countless branches.

「—Reload on Fire」

Butm instantly, due to the Quick Shot of Fugil who stood in her way, all the branches were severed.

「Damn, it.....」

The remnant of Hayes's consciousness fell into shadow, and a fragment of that core was taken into Listelka.

The third imperial princess whose body was burned in hatred returned like that to the death she originally belonged to.

Part 19

「It's finally over. With this, everything is—」

Listelka who was teleported to the control room with Fugil faced the main body of Automata Arshalia.

Perhaps her tension until now was cut off, or perhaps he interfered with Avalon too much with her magic eye that she was exhausted, Listelka staggered and she was about to fall, but Fugil immediately supported her.

She moved Sacred Eclipse through the mind of Hayes who accidentally got fused with it, and her strategy to take advantage of the world alliance's opening succeeded.

That was something that couldn't be done without knowing the special property of Sacred Eclipse while having resolve to sacrifice her family.

However Listelka wasn't feeling the slightest regret.

Rather relieve was spreading inside her chest.

「This is the critical moment. Please keep your composure.」

「Yes, let's call Mishis too after I connect to the central. Surely she has arrive at nearby.」

『Then, the third trial will begin from now. Have you finished your preparation?』

「Please begin. I have been waiting eagerly for this time since the day I woke up.」

「Then」

Arshalia stepped forward, at the same time countless cords were connected to Listelka and the connection began.

Nanomachine poured into her blood and she was tuned into the mechanism

of Avalon.

In addition with the core of Sacred Eclipse that she took inside herself just now blending into her flesh, she perfectly grasped the function and became able to use it.

After just ten minutes, the cords connected to Listelka were taken off.

She safely finished the third trial.

「How are you feeling, my master?」

When Fugil called out to her, Listelka smiled with a haggard voice.

A burden was put on her while the connection was going on, but the excitement which surpassed it filled her to the brim.

「—It's amazing Fugil! To think, that Sacred Eclipse is this magnificent. That it is able to perform something so amazing!」

Even the knowledge to control Avalon was also sent directly into Listelka's brain.

The obtained information was applied in the form of physical experience through the brain. She was able to control Avalon freely.

It granted Listelka with an unprecedented feeling of omnipotent.

She also learned for the first time the same information like what Aeryl discovered in the Moon's archive.

「I see, my decision was correct. The person who obtained Avalon can rule this world. I'm able to comprehend the meaning and essence of that. There is no more problem. After resting for a bit here, first I will revive the 『Key of the Surface』—the strongest battle strength Sacred Eclipse, and make use of that strength.」

「.....I see, what will your majesty do first with that?」

「Of course, I'll purify this world. For several hundred years the Holy Arcadia Empire was forgotten from the world. This world is dirtied too much by unnecessary people. Well, I don't mind leaving behind a part of the masses but, it's necessary to erase the whole ruling class.」

「I see.」

Fugil kept smiling and casted his eyes down after hearing Listelka's words.

Listeka seemed to interpret it as acceptance and she slowly walked toward the center of the control room and twirled like a little girl.

Then Fugil took out a lump of metal from his breast pocket and put it on the nearby table.

Listelka tilted her head seeing that tool which looked like a toy.

「What could that be?」

「It is a scale. A tool to compare weight and measure the balance.」

Although Fugil answered, there was nothing put on that scale.

He had a habit of seeing scale sometimes like this.

But, Listelka had no interest in such thing.

Rather than that now that she had obtained a complete victory, there was something that she wished to ask Fugil.

「Fugil, can I ask you one thing? Why did you save us imperial princesses at that time?」

The Ark where Listelka and others, the imperial family of the Lord and their close aides were hiding and sleeping inside pods.

A force of Arcadia Empire that got wind of that hiding place attacked, and when she was about to get killed, Fugil slaughtered the empire troops instead.

「Thanks to you, I am able to get back on my foot from that situation of absolute despair until this far. We Lord are able to arrive until the path of restoration. There were also a lot of people who became sacrifice, but if you and Mishis gives me your help, the paradise of the Lord can be rebuild without a doubt.」

「The reason I saved you. That is—because that is exactly the mission of a hero.」

Fugil declared with a tone and expression that contained no doubt.

「You at that time was an existence that had to be saved by the world. I simply obeyed that will.」

「.....Geez, that's not an interesting reason isn't it? I'm happy that you believed me as an existence that is worthy to be saved, but that, even if there was a bit more reason to that—」

Listelka puffed up her cheeks that were blushing red and her mouth pouted slightly.

But, before long she stared at a device with a serious expression to pull herself together.

「Mishis is approaching near. Let's contact her using Dragon Voice. I will also create a teleportation entrance for her to enter here.」

Listelka became able to freely allow teleportation to inside due to her connection to the central. She quickly contacted Mishis.

「Even so it's unexpected. To think that Mishis can suffer this much injury, as expected it's dangerous to allow the remaining Drag-Knights to live. I'll stop trying to put them under my command and swiftly eliminate them.」

「.....Is it really all right for you?」

「Yes, if the army of the world is destroyed altogether across the board, there won't be anyone who resist anymore.」

「By doing that, you will turn the majority of this world into enemy though—」

「I don't mind.」

Listelka smiled at Fugil with an expression that contained no doubt.

「It's possible if I have the power of this Avalon and Sacred Eclipse. Beside that, Fugil. As long as you stay by my side, it's not a concern even if the world become enemy. Let's begin soon. The first step to correct this world—」

Listelka headed toward the main body of Arshalia and stretched her hand toward her.

「Is that so.」

With the voice of Fugil behind her, she closed her eyes in order to control

Avalon. At that time, she heard a voice.

—

「—It's unfortunate. You erred in your choice.」

—

Listelka felt an impact and out of place feeling in her left chest. Her eyes opened wide.

The blade of a Sword Device was growing out from her heart.

—No, she was stabbed from behind.

Even after witnessing that fact with her eyes, she was unable to understand the situation.

After all she knew better than anyone that there was nothing that was a threat to her in this control room.

Thus, she finally noticed when looking at the silver wall surface that was polished like mirror.

How the Automata before her had half her face dyed red by Listelka's blood spurt.

And then, how Fugil behind her was stabbing a sword into her chest.

「Fu, gil.....? What, are you, doing.....?」

Listelka forgot even the intense pain that made her unable to even breath and asked.

It was impossible.

He was Fugil, who betrayed even the old empire he belonged with in order to save Listelka.

Until now he would listen to her consultation cordially beside her, led her, and gave all his effort for the restoration of the Lord. For that Fugil, to kill her was just—.

「It's the scale. You are tilting the fate for your own sake too much. You don't have the caliber of king to rule over this world. If you understood that, then you

would still have a future.」

「Co, ugh.....」

Her breath slipped out in the place of a reply. Listelka collapsed while vomiting blood fiercely.

「Why.....is this? I.....if, you just stay by my side, then anything——.....u」

The fingertip of Listelka who was gradually losing strength stretched toward Fugil's ankle.

Her red eye was looking up while trickling out tears, but Fugil didn't even glance at it.

「——It was only your resolve that was splendid. You risked your life for a great cause even if you had to cut down your own family or that other people would hate you. Everything was for the sake of the Lord's restoration but, you deviated too much. You were captured by the greatness of the strength you obtained, and became the enemy of a lot of the weak. That is something you mustn't do.」

「.....」

Fugil turned his back toward Listelka who expired on the sea of blood and stretched his hand toward the Automata Arshalia.

「So you are a qualified person who has finished the third trial. Will you connect to the central once more?」

「I guess, I'll rely on you once more now. This time a slightly large scale revision is necessary. Besides now that Hayes's consciousness has vanished and Listelka who connected with central has died too, Sacred Eclipse will find a new host candidate. An existence of fate's singularity who wish for salvation more than anyone——」

「Understood. Beginning preparation.」

「I have to remove external enemy that is approaching here. But, can I leave the clean up to you Arshalia? Looks like the number of corpse will increase by one more after this.」

After Fugil spoke so indifferently, Mishis appeared in a tattered Azi Dahaka.

The iron maid who was always calm and collected showed eyes that were dyed with rage and hatred.

「—Why? Why did you kill Listelka-sama-!? My lord who was dearly yearning for you so much like that!」

Mishis yelled while stabbing a short blade of seven colors into her own arm.

She was trying to cover for her lost stamina using Elixir injection.

But, Fugil was still curt even after hearing the angry yell of the strongest Key's Supervisor.

He simply summoned Uroboros's special armament Infinity and deployed it into Bahamut that he then wore casually.

With a bland face, he responded to Mishis who was directing killing intent that was like a raging fire toward him.

「You are asking me why? You should have known why though. I am the hero, it is none other than I who was recognized by her as this world's messiah.」

「So you have planned this from the start? You saved Listelka-sama to make use of her bloodline, in order to obtain this Avalon—」

Mishis whose body surface was dyed jet black moved at the same time with her yell.

She skated in high speed with the wheels of Azi Dahaka and swung down her halberd with a speed like bullet.

(It's already too late to intercept with Reload on Fire! This attack cannot be dodged!) Inside the control room that was a bit cramped for fighting, the true worth of Avesta that could steal energy and Divine Raiment could be displayed freely.

The halberd that lunged with the conviction of victory caught Fugil's Drag-Ride, at the same time she yelled.

「—Avesta.....tsu!?!」

The moment she activated Azi Dahaka's Divine Raiment using mind control operation, Mishis was captured by a strange sensation.

「.....-!?!」

There was no feedback of her halberd landing. No, it vanished.

Fugils' figure suddenly disappeared.

「Farewell, Key's Supervisor.」

Fugil lightly swung his great sword behind her. Just with that, the armor of Azi Dahaka that Mishis wore was smashed into pieces.

「—Wha-!?!」

「Zero One—the special armament that Urobors has, it can erase the existence of the designated target from this world's space and rematerialize it again.」

0 and 1. It was a power that could freely erase and call back the designated existence like an off and on switch.

Due to the other special armament that Uroboros had, the existence of Fugil wearing Bahamut was erased from the world, and when his existence was materialized once more, he slashed the defenseless Mishis.

Fugil's voice announced the present situation along with a cold gaze.

The destruction of Azi Dahaka that happened on Mishis's body, and her next fate.

「There is a limit even in making a wrong guess. Your fault is that blindness of yours, Mishis. You entrust your will to someone else and put forth your whole effort into it, and you are unable to step out from that even for a step. It's too presumptuous for a mere existence who wishes for her own death to follow after her master to even lay a hand on this me.」

Fugil's voice that was filled with disdain struck the eardrum of Mishis who was crumbling on the floor.

Right after that, Mishis's limbs and head were separated from her torso. Her life closed its curtain.

「—But, I'll at least acknowledge your strength as Drag-Knight. After all you even made me use the second special armament of Uroboros.」

Fugil's hand was holding a Sword Device that was different from Bahamut.
The power of Uroboros that showed its figure had already activated.
Mishis didn't notice that true shape.

—

「Fugil. The preparation is finished. It will take some time until Sacred Eclipse is revived, but the target designation is finished. Ten minutes remaining until the activation of the revision device.」

Arshalia's voice echoed inside the control room that became empty.

「Then teleport me outside. I'll take care of the hindrances. I'll leave the rest to you.」

「Yes. Please be careful.」

After exchanging only those words, Fugil's whole body was wrapped by bluish white light.

His figure vanished along with the light in no time at all, and he was teleported to the ruins above.

Epilogue – Ruins’ Zero

Part 1

Gogon, gogon....., the sound of something moving echoed in the ruin of old castle intermittently.

The mountains of rubbles that piled up high and the grey colored townscape.

The remaining fire from the long deathly battle that surrounded Avalon was smoldering in the area.

「U, uu.....」

When Lux woke up, the armor of Bahamut was dispelled.

The backlash from Over Limit and the intense pain made him unable to exert his strength, but he was barely able to open his eyes.

The scene that was the projection of Arcadia Empire in the past had vanished.

What remained was the pillar of light that showed the position of central and Fugil Arcadia who was standing in front of it.

「What, happened.....? Lisha-sama, Singlen—」

Lux muttered with wheezing breath, but far from standing, he was unable to even crawl.

A single girl was standing in front of such Lux.

The captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, and the owner of a big company, Magialca Zen Vanfrick.

Her expression was daring as usual. She was looking down quietly on Lux.

「Don't worry my sweetheart. All of your comrades are safe. Well, they are in a state of only barely keeping their life though. Right now they are being brought to the fortress through my subordinates' instruction. You did well stopping Singlen. That guy—it seems he is hiding himself somewhere. Well, most likely he is fixing his own body and Drag-Ride, using the power of Baptism and his special armament.」

「Is, that so..... That's great. Everyone, is, safe.....」

When Lux let out a relieved sigh, Magialca made a wide mysterious grin.

「Don't worry about the rest and leave it to me. My stamina is still remaining for one more battle. I'll kill that funny clown and make Avalon into my own.」

「.....Clown?」

Right after Lux showed a doubtful look, he noticed what was ahead of Magialca's gaze.

Under the feet of Fugil who was standing still beside the pillar of light, Mishis whose head was severed and her life expired, and Listelka whose torso was stabbed were lying down.

「I don't know what happened but, well, from the look, there is no doubt he betrayed his master.」

「.....」

Lux was speechless. He was looking at that with a dumbfounded expression, but Fugil who wasn't wearing Drag-Ride didn't move at all.

The five Seven Dragon Paladins who were liberated from inside Fernyiges and Aeril who escaped from the ice were slowly surrounding Fugil.

「You look really composed there. Is it okay? We've got no spare strength to go easy y'know?」

Greifer who was wearing Cuelebre glared at Fugil suspiciously.

「If you are planning to surrender then you better say it from your end. I'm reluctant to kill a human after all.」

In addition the youngest Mel Gizalut announced with a firm tone.

「I don't feel sympathy because that is a fitting end for traitors buut, it doesn't change that you are also enemy.」

Rosa wearing Gorynych acted confidently. She closed the distance while saying that.

「There is no more time. Before Avalon that you are trying to activate is moving, we will decide this battle.」

Soffice spoke expressionlessly with tension filling her tone,

「I'm someone who turned my back on my elder sister and little sister and parted away from them. I also understand that I have no qualification to say something like this. But, you are the only one who I won't forgive!」

Aeril who was wearing Zahhak put her strength into the hand holding the control stick.

They had turned their sword to each other due to the difference in conviction, even so there was no doubt that someone who betrayed and killed her sisters who she shared blood relation with was her enemy.

At the end Magialca threw a question to Fugil as though to consolidate everyone's will.

「Then, how about we start soon? It's six against one but we won't give any mercy. Have you resolved yourself?」

She deployed the Divine Drag-Ride Jormungandr and took command. Fugil slightly lifted his face and responded to her.

「—Knock it off. All of you know too much.」

Fugil announced along with a snigger and a tone that didn't even sound interested.

「In around ten more minutes, the reorganization of the world by Avalon will begin. The function will work without problem as long as you all won't become hindrance. You can then make your choice once more inside that new fate and history.」

「Shut up Fugil. I already talked with everyone here! I don't know what you can possibly wish for but, I won't let everything goes as you wish anymore!」

Zahhak quickly moved its armored arm and attacked using Breath Whip.

But, Fugil drew out his Sword Device from his waist and the whip was instantly erased.

It wasn't destroyed, its very existence was instantly gone.

But, when Fugil swung his Sword Device once more, the Breath Whip that should have vanished appeared.

It was stolen in order to block Aeryl's whip and then it was returned.

「What the hell is this.....!? The whip suddenly vanish and appear.....!」
(Greifer) 「I don't know. Most likely it's Ouroboros's special armament that is called Zero One. But how? Even though Ourouboros's main frame is still not visible, the Divine Drag-Ride's special armament can be used?」

While Aeryl was warily muttering, Magialca sent instruction to everyone using Dragon Voice.

『In any case, we've got to start by solving the puzzle. I'll decide the strategy. Let's go』

『—Roger』

Greifer, mel, Rosa, Soffice, and then Aeryl responded. During that time, Fugil gripped the handle of his Sword Device and summoned Bahamut in front of him.

Lux who was seeing that sight from slightly far away was carried in the arms of Magialca's aide Lolotte and they started to retreat.

While his consciousness was sinking into darkness, a past memory surfaced at the back of Lux's mind once more and words slipped out naturally from his mouth.

「Everyone, be careful..... That guy, is, dangerous.....!」

Part 2

The day of revolution five days ago.

The high pitched sound of sword fight resounded at the sky above Arcadia Empire's castle.

When Fugil who finished off the imperial guards in the audience hall went to annihilate the remaining imperial family, Lux returned and stopped him.

「.....Why? Why are you hindering m my wise younger brother? I am trying to save you and your little sister you know?」

「No! That's not it! I am asking your objective! Why are you destroying this country? Even though it was you who saved this country several hundred years ago!」

Lux who was wearing Bahamut asked with a yell.

In respond Fugil formed a composed smile and talked to his little brother of different mother.

「To think that you will speak such words, my wise younger brother. This people have to be dealt with here. These bunches who were persecuted for many years now become the one who have grown too impudent, they don't have even a shred of conscience anymore. That's why everything has to be redone from beginning. I have to make you to accomplish that role next. I am carrying out my mission in accordance with the will of Sacred Eclipse that was created in order to save the world, since more than a thousand years ago that you all have completely forgotten.」

「.....-!?!」

Lux's doubt was changed into conviction with that sentence.

Fugil wasn't Lux's brother or anything.

And then, he wasn't even someone from the old empire.

「Sacred Eclipse that was a device to save the world was mixed with poison due to the hand of the foolish humans. It is a broken device that had lost half of its true essence, but I will correct this world along with the Sacred Eclipse. I continue to wait for the king of salvation who will lead this world correctly. I continue to save for that sake.」

「What are you planning to do!? What are you planning to make me do after saving me!?!」

Lux swung his great sword and pushed Fugil back.

The man danced in the dark night sky while smiling calmly.

「I will grant you your wish, my wise younger brother. The thing that the powerless and weak you wished, that you yearned for. The one who destroy the chain of negativity that human established and bring salvation. You have earned the qualification to walk the path of hero just like me.」

Gogon!, the sound came from behind Fugil.

The moonlight that peeked out from between the clouds illuminated the castle that was enveloped in flame.

What existed behind Fugil, was a chalk white giant dragon looking down on the castle.

「Something like my mission has been decided already, my wise younger brother. Since the far away past, the reason of my existence has been determined. Just like how the you who was powerless slightly a while ago once wished to become that.」

Fugil looked down on Lux with the moonlight and a giant dragon that pierced the sky serving as his background.

His eyes that had the same grey color like Lux were dyed by darkness and reflected emptiness.

—

「—A hero, resist against fate and wish for salvation. An ally of the weak.」

—

It wasn't self-derision or even ridicule.

The man's smile that was filled with the ruin of abyss surfaced inside the dark night.

Afterword

Thank you for every time. This is Akatsuki.

The previous afterword was only half a page, so I cut the content and packed it full, but I completely forgot that content and it was a pain to search for a material (sweat).

Recently the passing of the day and month feel fast, the time went by in a flash just from me doing work.

On the contrary the flow of time in the story is becoming slow, but this time I wrote too much battle scene and got really tired (lol).

—

The backlash from that, it feels like the next volume will have a lot of love comedy factor when returning to the new kingdom.

There are a lot of heroines, so I think it will become something outrageous.

And then, it will become spoiler if I talk too much but, in this volume 14 the Seven Dragon Paladins arc has reached the finale.

Or rather, it's mostly finished at this point of time.

I think the mystery of the situation here can be cleared at the next volume, so I want to work hard so I can properly write something good.

I wasn't really interested in VR type game, but I want to do 『What Did I Do to Deserve This, My Lord?』 so it feels like I would buy it.

It feels like it would be easy to do if there aren't many accesories to it but, hmmm.....

—

And so now it's the thanks corner.

Kasuga Ayumu-sama who is in charge of illustration.

Thank you very much for the illustrations of various scenes this time too in the middle of your busy time.

My editor M-sama.

My apology that the usual manuscript became really much. I want to finish the next volume with moderate number of page.

—

And then all of you readers who has kept this series company for this year too, my thanks to you all from the bottom of my heart.

Best regard for the new development from the next volume too.